

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय

SANTINIKETAN.
VISWA BHARATI
LIBRARY

D. B
9207
G 934

**HODDER AND STOUGHTON'S
PEOPLE'S LIBRARY**

General Editor : Sidney Dark

Books by PHILIP GUEDALLA

THE SECOND EMPIRE

MEN OF LETTERS

MEN OF AFFAIRS

MEN OF WAR

STILL LIFE

BONNET AND SHAWL

(In the People's Library)

PALMERSTON

INDEPENDENCE DAY

GLADSTONE AND PALMERSTON

CONQUISTADOR: AMERICAN FANTASIA

THE MISSING MUSE AND OTHER
ESSAYS

BONNET AND SHAWL AN ALBUM

BY
PHILIP GUEDALLA

Wives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

H&S

**HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LIMITED LONDON**

First printed September, 1920
Reprinted October, 1922

*Printed in Great Britain for Hodder and Stoughton, Limited,
by Richard Clay & Sons, Limited, Bungay, Suffolk.*

TO
THE MEMORY OF
EDMUND GOSSE
AFFECTIONATELY

CONTENTS

REAL

	PAGE
JANE WELSH CARLYLE	9
CATHERINE GLADSTONE	41
MARY ARNOLD	71
MARY ANNE DISRAELI	103
EMILY TENNYSON	133
EMILY PALMERSTON	165

IDEAL

LADY MURIEL JAMES	197
SOPHIA SWINBURNE	209
JULIE DE GONCOURT	217

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

Terse Verse
being a contribution to Scottish Anthology.

*Hail ye hills and heaths of Ecclefechan !
Hail ye banks and braes of Craigenputtock !
T. Carlyle was born in Ecclefechan,
Jane his wife was born in Craigenputtock.
She, a pearl where eye detect no speck can,
He, ordained to close with and cross-buttock
Cant, the giant—these, O Ecclefechan,
These your glories be, O Craigenputtock !*

BROWNING.

(Impromptu written for Tennyson)

THE road from Templand to Biggar and on to Edinburgh is not of unusual beauty. Even a solitary postchaise rolling along it late one autumn afternoon in 1826 could hardly make it beautiful, though perhaps it seemed so to the pair inside. Yet even that is doubtful, though they had just been married; since the bridegroom, dissuaded with some effort

BONNET AND SHAWL

from the ghastly, though inexpensive, project of conveying his bride by stage-coach and the no less embarrassing (if more generous) design of taking a young brother part of the way with them, had stipulated with her that she should let him “by the road, as occasion serves, *smoke three cigars* without criticism or reluctance, as things essential to my perfect contentment.” For, as a later singer notes,

a woman is only a woman, but a good
cigar is a Smoke.

Perhaps he smoked them, though biography (elsewhere so prodigal of information as to his domestic habits) is silent on the point. Perhaps the wedding chaise drew up at some convenient point, and a gaunt form emerged to inhale contentment by the roadside on his wedding-day. At any rate, he made the stipulation; and the mood which it reveals was scarcely that of honeymoon. Small wonder that her heart misgave a little when she saw her lover “fly from my caresses to—smoke

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

tobacco, or speak of me as a new *circumstance* of your lot," and that he called her final letter before marriage "The Last Speech and *marrying* words of that unfortunate young woman Jane Baillie Welsh." Unfortunate indeed. .

II

The courtship had been odd : it was bound to be. For Miss Welsh was, in the noblest sense, a lady. Indeed, she was a lady in the ignobler sense as well : since her father was a doctor, and Welshes in their more boastful moments alluded to John Knox as an ancestor. Her mother's line aspired to even greater heights, since it claimed descent from Wallace. Besides, she did no housework, was a kind of heiress, and wrote verse. They called her the flower of Haddington. So Miss Welsh was, beyond all doubt, a lady. But Carlyle was, as the Duke of Wellington said of Napoleon, "emphatically, *not* a gentleman." Efforts to trace his descent

BONNET AND SHAWL

from a brother of the murdered Duncan were received with wild derision by this prickly flower of Annandale, who vastly preferred to feel his roots in the village street of Ecclefechan. In fine, he was a peasant.

But he was an unusual peasant. All the Carlyles were rather unusual, from their alarming father with his contempt for conversation and “his tongue-paralysing cold indifferent ‘Hah’” to the tiny Jean dictating rhymed epistles before she had even learnt to write. They were united, though. Perhaps a sense of their oddity served to unite them; and the most articulate of the family could write that “we Carlyles are a clannish people because we have all something original in our formation, and find therefore less than common sympathy with others; so that we are constrained, as it were, to draw to one another, and to seek that friendship in our own blood which we do not find so readily elsewhere.” Not that he nestled passively in any feather-

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

bed of family affection. For he was not, was very far indeed from being, a clinging type. Even a mother's pride confessed that he was "gey ill to deal wi'"; and the world confirmed her. But that was just the Carlylè in him. They could all be Carlys together in Annandale; and his nature always found its place in the cottage circle, where the sons stumbled in from work to find their father reading sermons and a small sister sewing samplers. He was at home there. All his life, indeed, he was never very far from Annandale. It followed him to Chelsea and even into the transcendental, lending a strong Dumfriesshire accent to his communings with the eternal verities. For he remained, as he began, a peasant.

He was a Scottish peasant, though; and in consequence his education left nothing to be desired. For a village boy, who was prepared to walk the hundred miles or so to Edinburgh, might go to college. There he could see the

BONNET AND SHAWL

world and read the classics, finding Homer grand and Horace light-minded, in the intervals of waiting for the Ecclefechan carrier to bring fresh supplies of oatmeal and clean shirts from home. He had taught school as well, and read Goethe in a comfortable ditch outside the farm, to say nothing of a recurring itch for literary fame—"Heaven knows that ever since I have been able to form a wish, the wish of being known has been the foremost. Oh Fortune ! . . . grant me that, with a heart of independence unyielding to thy favours and unbending to thy frowns, I may attain to literary fame." The wish was granted, but not yet, though the Muses called already with the slightly chilling utterance of Dr. Brewster inviting him to write stray articles for his *Encyclopædia*. He was to be a minister, of course, and gratify the village parents. But the Kirk's call was faint; and he turned school-teacher instead, with a vague inclination to the law. It would be almost as gratifying to Annandale if they could

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

make a fine lawyer of him. So the law prevailed; and he was soon back in Edinburgh with ninety pounds, fortified by anxious warnings from his family against that “unwholecome city . . . and its selfish and unfeeling inhabitants.” Behind him Annandale watched eagerly; and, strong in their confidence, he wrestled with the intricacies of Scottish jurisprudence, philosophic doubts, and an inadequate digestion, pausing in the struggle to send home a new hat for Sandy or a bonnet for his mother and supporting his first steps in the new profession by taking private pupils in mathematics.

He had a friend as well, who had taught school with him. Like Carlyle, the handsome Irving was from Dumfriesshire, and when fate took them to Kirkcaldy, the two exiles from Annandale marooned in Fife drew naturally together. The friendship lasted; and in his Edinburgh days they tramped the moors, wrote endless letters, and discussed the universe at

BONNET AND SHAWL

length, until one summer afternoon in 1821 Irving took his melancholy young friend to pay a call in Haddington. They were to call on Mrs. Welsh, and Miss Welsh was expected to be at home as well. She liked to be at home to gentlemen. Did she not crowd into a brief career consuming, but still briefer, passions for the Artillery Boy, an artist with an amethyst ring, George Rennie, Dugald G., "a handsome fascinating Colonel of the Guards who held an umbrella over me for four-and-twenty hours," a farmer's son from somewhere near, and the obliging doctor who played shuttlecock, to say nothing of a captain in the Lancers, her second cousin from Leeds, and an Englishman afflicted with a stammer? A later catalogue, assuming almost Homeric proportions, even includes the shadowy names of Robert MacTurk, James Aitken, James Baird, and Robby Angus. For if Jane's reckoning was correct, Penelope had not more suitors. The bright brunette had once importuned her father for permission "to

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

learn Latin like a boy.” But in spite of Latin, Jane, one fears, was still quite recognisably a girl.

So she was sure to be at home when Mr. Irving brought his friend. For callers in Haddington were an event. Besides, Mr. Irving had been her particular friend, had even tutored her with slightly more than a tutorial zeal.” True, at the moment George Rennie appeared to be the ruling star in her firmament. But Mr. Irving managed to combine in a most elegant degree the ardent and the clerical. It was a little late when they arrived—“a red, dusky evening, the sky hanging huge and high, but dim as with dust or drought over Irving and me.” Carlyle approached the encounter without undue exhilaration. He had walked sixteen miles; besides, Irving had introduced him to young ladies before. There had been one in Fife—a blonde Canadian with a stern aunt from Aberdeen, who fluttered into his life one afternoon in Irving’s rooms and fluttered out

BONNET AND SHAWL

again, promising to be a sister to him, with the excellent advice that he should "*cultivate the milder dispositions of your heart, subdue the more extravagant visions of the brain.* . . . Remove the awful distance between you and ordinary men, by kind and gentle manners; deal mildly with their inferiority, and be convinced they will respect you as much and like you more." (Was ever Cheyne Row more vividly foreseen?) That had been Irving's introduction. He seemed to have a fancy for presenting his slightly unattractive friend to delicious young ladies. It could do no harm; and (who knows?) it might give pleasure. He was particularly anxious to please Miss Welsh. Something, perhaps, remained from his tutorial ardours; and they all sat down to tea—the two pedestrians, Jane and her mother, a gentleman or so, and Miss Augusta. They drank tea and talked; Carlyle, in spite of indigestion, talked rather well; and afterwards, when they were safely back at the George inn, Irving gently

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

rallied his companion on the subject of the ladies. What would he take to marry Miss Augusta, now? Carlyle, whose badinage was apt to be a little massive, responded : " Not for an entire and perfect chrysolite the size of this terraqueous globe." And what, his friend persisted, would he take to marry Miss Jeannie ? " Hah," he replied, inspired by this agreeable alternative to less geological repartee, " I should not be so hard to deal with there, I should imagine." But hard enough for Jeannie; and, perhaps, a little hard for Irving, too.

So the two had met. They met again in the next day or so, when there was talk of Jane's literary aspirations. She ached to serve the Muses; and that high design appeared to call for more tutorial assistance. This time, as Mr. Irving was deep in his clerical career, it might be rendered by Carlyle; and he was soon prescribing a light course of Hume and Robertson, with Tasso and Madame de Staël as relaxa-

BONNET AND SHAWL

tions. The bibliography which she received from him after their first meeting was slightly illumined by a coy reference to "the Lady Jane" and "those few Elysian hours we spent together lately." He even took leave of his fair correspondent in the gay obscurity of a romantic language—" *Addio Donna mia cara!* " This was swift going. But Jane was singularly unresponsive and returned his books with barely courteous orthography "To Mr. Carslile, with Miss Welsh's compliments and very best thanks." To be snubbed is sad; but to be misspelt and snubbed is overwhelming. Her dejected tutor, who had begun the correspondence hopefully enough with his "dear Friend," reverted hastily to his "dear Madam," quoted a line of Virgil, and explained the correct spelling of his name. But his incorrigible pupil, still haunted by her uneasy sense of a silent *s* lurking somewhere, persisted in her error and communicated once again with " Mr. Carslile." The much-enduring man grew almost plaintive,

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

and she learned her lesson. A few months later he learned his, after "dear Madam" had warmed to "dear Friend" again and the young lady, finding her new tutor quite as embarrassing as her old one (and not half as handsome)," firmly warned him that "I dislike as much as my Mother disapproves your somewhat too ardent expressions of Friendship towards me; and that if you cannot write to me as to a man who feels a deep interest in your welfare, who admires your talents, respects your virtues, and for the sake of these has often—perhaps too often—overlooked your faults; if you cannot write to me as if—as if you were married, you need never waste ink or paper on me more." More followed in Jane's sternest strain—the man positively seemed to fancy she had fallen in love with him and proposed to reward his literary labours with her self; other Misses might fall in love and marry, but never Jane; his intended visit, if her inclinations were to be consulted, would be most distasteful, as giving

BONNET AND SHAWL

rise to impertinent conjectures and leading ill-natured Haddington to tattle about its flower. She was extremely angry, and one can almost hear her foot stamp at the end of each little sentence. But in a quieter mood she added that she was prepared, like the blonde Canadian, to be a sister to him. Sadly enlightened, he sought refuge in Schiller and, back at "dear Madam" once again, advised the composition of a tragedy on Boadicea. What rejected suitor ever planned a more awful vengeance?

Their correspondence flowed more evenly along this safely literary channel; Carlyle prescribing hard with occasional snatches of home-made verse, and Jane living in a delicious whirl of ancient history, Italian, and her "dear, dear German." She even found time to send him notes upon her callers, with the less scholastic information that she had been putting feathers into a hat. He was a habit with her now; and her "dear Sir" was favoured

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

with narratives of other suitors' fates, her journey to the Highlands (with notes on stray admirers), her daily habits, hours of tea-drinking and attention to the reticule, and the purely secular intelligence that " by cutting my hair in a new fashion and *sewing my waists to my skirts*, . . . I have so expedited the process of dressing that it costs me on no occasion above ten minutes." Slightly encouraged, he launched the hopeful project of collaboration with her in a highly dishevelled novel, in which a disconsolate philosopher and a worldly lady were to die of love for one another.

It was nearly two years since the first afternoon at Haddington. She still remembered it and wrote of the occasion now with almost lingering reminiscence. He had reminded her, it seems, of her lost father, although she had not seemed to notice the resemblance at the time. But now she spelt his name correctly ; " dear Sir " had vanished with " dear Madam " ; and Carlyle was " dear Friend " to Jane, as she to

BONNET AND SHAWL

him. News of his literary projects fired her : if she could not be a Muse herself (and Schiller was really very difficult to translate), she might yet be the nymph Egeria. So the letters travelled happily between Edinburgh and Haddington. They were at ease with one another ; and when she wrote to tell him how success in London was making Irving a shade grotesque, he received the news quite easily—“ What a wicked creature you are to make me laugh so at poor Irving.” Here was a new Carlyle—and, perhaps, a new Jane also.

He had climbed now to “ dear Jane ” without a protest ; he could pour out his plans to her, while she admiringly received them ; and in an ecstasy of good advice he sketched a placid future for her, in which she was to write innumerable essays (especially one on Friendship) in the society of her mother and “ the good people round you,” with himself for perpetual tutor. Marriage was almost artfully excluded from this agreeable perspective ;

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

and without a shade of irony he even undertook to be a brother to her. Such abnegation was rewarded. For her very next letter invited him to Haddington—" and come when you like, Dear." Incalculable Jane.

Now they looked comfortably back together at poor dear Irving " in a very foamy state." Delightful vistas of highly improving reading stretched endlessly before them; there were thoughts of *Tales from the German, translated and selected by Jane Baillie Welsh* in octavo, with a preface or so by her devoted tutor. Meanwhile he thoughtfully advised her how to repel unsuitable admirers. Indeed, his anxiety to keep her single was positively touching. He portrayed the emptiness of married life in fashionable circles; he praised her genius; he pointed to the heights. Jane stood beside him and peered up at them a little doubtfully. But if the steep ascent would overtax her powers, she still might watch another scale Parnassus. For the nymph Egeria was stirring

BONNET AND SHAWL

in her; and this hopeful mood prompted an odd confession of her admiration—"When shall a world know your worth as I do? . . . a haughty genius . . . giant power . . . I *will* wish you *famous*." Such letters, even when addressed to tutors, lead to misunderstanding; and Carlyle, flushed with the simultaneous news of Irving safely marrying somewhere off in Fife, misunderstood. One tutor safely wed, the other leapt to the assault. "Thank God," he cried by return of post, "it is not a dream : Jane loves me ! she loves me ! and I swear by the Immortal Powers that she shall yet be mine, as I am hers, thro' life and death." The man was really most provoking—he had misunderstood again. Of course she loved him (the exasperating girl positively repeated it), but only as a sister—"your Friend I will be, your truest most devoted Friend, while I breathe the breath of life ; but not your Wife !" Could anything be plainer? The Canadian blonde, he would recall, had said the

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

same. This time Carlyle received the lesson meekly—" You love me as a sister and will not wed; I love you in all possible senses of the word, and will not wed, any more than you. . . . So long as you have charity to hear me . . . I will speak and listen; when you tire of this, when you marry, or cast me off in any of the thousand ways that fortune is ever offering, I shall of course cease to correspond with you, I shall cease to love Mrs. —, but not Jane Welsh; the image she will have left on my mind I shall always love. . . ." So there he was, a little touching and her tutor once again.

The age of reason was resumed. Once more the nymph Egeria could enjoy the confidences of a real man of letters and fan (by correspondence) his heated brow, whilst he bent over his lives of German poets and his own translation of *William Meister*, which wrestled with the dark powers of dyspepsia for the possession of his soul. But though it was resumed, the

BONNET AND SHAWL

age of reason had its consolations, since it was conducted to a subdued accompaniment of Platonic endearments. He was her “ Dearest ” now ; and when she wrote to her “ Dearly beloved ” and her “ beloved Brother,” Jane could subscribe herself as “ yours forever and ever.” On his side as well the flame burned brighter ; and as his ardour grew, his tone became diminishingly fraternal. His “ dear Jane ” was soon his “ dearest ” and finally his “ own Jane ” ; and, foreign languages lending their delicious aid, “ *Ma bien Aimeé* ” became “ *Bestes Liebchen*,” “ *Herzenskind*,” and (highest flight of all) “ *Herzens Liebling*.” Somehow it seemed to sound more intellectual in a foreign language ; was he not her German tutor ? Besides, her mother used to read his letters by arrangement ; and where Mrs. Welsh might properly have been alarmed by such avowals in honest Scots, they had an almost learned air in German. But Jane could hardly miss them ; and Jane was plainly

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

less alarmed. After eight months, indeed, Plato was wearing thin; and she wrote anxiously, when he alluded to their common future with undue precision, “ For mercy’s sake keep in mind that my peace of mind, my credit with my Mother, the continuance of our correspondence, everything, depends upon your appearing as my Friend, not as my Lover.” Appearances, it seems, were vital; but what underlay them ?

That soon appeared. For destiny transported him to London; and Jane was never more devoted than when he left his Gaelic solitudes to encounter the great world and all its manifold temptations. His artful news of meetings with “ a little black-eyed, auburn-haired brunette ” elicited a sharp rejoinder—“ Miss Kitty Kirkpatrick—Lord what an ugly name ! ‘ Good Kitty ’ ! Oh, pretty, dear, delightful Kitty ! I am not a bit jealous of her, not I indeed. . . . Only you may as well never let me hear you mention her name again.” Trans-

BONNET AND SHAWL

parent Jane. These vials discharged, she passed to an idyllic vision of her own future “ with *One* to be the polar star of my being—one warm-hearted, high-minded, *dearest* Friend, whose sublime genius would shed an ennobling grace on all around him; whose graceful and splendid qualities would inspire a love that should be the heart and soul of my life ! ” The reference was pointed. For the dawn of jealousy had made her strangely explicit; and, dancing with impatience, she waited for his next. It came, with his customary avowals and the unappetising project that she should retire with him to Annandale and watch him translating Schiller. Sure of him once more, she took refuge in the enigmatic. She even ventured on a joke, hinting that if farming land was what he required, her farm at Craigenputtock might be convenient. Carlyle was not a man to joke with and responded promptly with a grim proposal of marriage, to be followed by life together at Craigen-

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

puttock. Thus she would secure at once a tenant and a husband. The hounds were on her now; but, wearied by the long pursuit, Jane made less effort than usual to escape: she was sensible instead—of course she loved him, had told him so a hundred times; but there was love *and* love; and hers for him was no overwhelming passion; it was “a love which *influences*, does not *make* the destiny of a life”; besides, he was without a certain livelihood, could not maintain her in the station in which . . . ; let him only secure “a modest but *settled* income”; then they would talk of married life, though not at Craigenputtock—“I would just as soon think of building myself a nest on the Bass Rock. . . . I would not spend a month at it with an Angel.” But she showed one gleam—at all events she would marry no one else. Pursuing still (and far from faint), he reasoned with her. The reasoning was simple. For the settled income, for which she stipulated, could not come until dyspepsia was

BONNET AND SHAWL

banished ; dyspepsia would stay with him until he had a thorough change ; Jane was to be the change. She fenced weaklier now. All that she asked was to see him “ earning a certain livelihood, and exercising the profession of a gentleman ” ; she confessed, indeed, that, given a little time, her own feeling for him might improve, might mount in fact from Plato to the altar ; for (she faced it boldly) it was probably her destiny to marry him, “ and in a year or so perhaps I shall consider it the only one ” ; but the time was not quite yet. So Jane melted, and the hunt was over ; and from that moment she viewed herself as his affianced wife.

Melting Jane was soon a Jane subdued, a Jane admitting “ to be *half-engaged* ” and writing to her “ adorable Mr. Thomas ” to confess all (and rather more than all) her former love for Irving. She read his letters now without her mother’s supervision ; and their love floated free at last from philosophical entanglements. Now it all ran upon their future—every

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

page covered brought him nearer to his reward, and, perhaps, by this time twelvemonth. . . . Even her mother seemed to smile upon the prospect. Not that the prospect was entirely placid. Did he not announce with ominous directness that “ the moment I am master of a house, the first use I turn it to will be to slam the door of it on the face of nauseous intrusions ”? Her heart misgave a little. It misgave, perhaps, a little more when on the subject of an impracticable scheme of life *à trois* with Mrs. Welsh he announced with the full dignity of underlining that “ *The man should bear rule in the house and not the woman.* ” That the sentiment was a translation from the German made it no better; and he made it worse by a full commentary—“ I must not and I cannot live in a house of which I am not head. I should be miserable myself, and make all about me miserable. Think not, Darling, that this comes from an imperious temper; that I shall be a harsh and tyrannical Husband to

BONNET AND SHAWL

thee. God forbid ! But it is the nature of a man that if he be controlled by anything but his own reason, he feels himself degraded, and incited, be it justly or not, to rebellion and discord. It is the nature of a woman again (for she is essentially *passive* not *active*) to cling to the man for support and direction; to comply with his humours, and feel pleasure in doing so, simply because they are his; to reverence while she loves him, to conquer him not by her force but by her weakness, and perhaps (the cunning gypsy !) after all to command him by obeying him. . . . My own four walls ! ” Here was the whole philosophy of Cheyne Row, translating into finer terms the thought of every peasant in Annandale and set almost menacingly in front of her.

In spite of all she still went forward, and—indomitable Jane—informed him gaily that they were soon to be the happiest pair in Annandale. Happy, perhaps. But in Annandale, beyond a doubt. For from now on her

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

life was all lived in a spiritual Annandale, where woman (the cunning gypsy !) might propose, but man disposed. So eager Jane and eager Thomas watched the summer weeks of 1826 go by, until one afternoon the wedding chaise rolled towards Biggar by the road from Templand, which is not of unusual beauty.

III

The chaise rolled on to Edinburgh, rolled on a few years later as far as Craigenputtock, where poor Jane, who had vowed she would not spend a month there with an angel, spent six long years with her husband and the manuscript of *Sartor*. It rolled on again one summer morning, taking a maid, Jane, Thomas, and a canary across the London squares. This time it was a hackney coach, loaded with luggage to the roof and further ; and it set them down before a newly-painted door in Chelsea. But even Annandale was never very far from Cheyne

BONNET AND SHAWL

Row. For here was the house that he had dreamed of, whose door could be slammed on the face of nauseous intrusions; and the man, according to his German text, bore undisputed rule. His own four walls enclosed them, where Jane was to cling to him and enjoy complying with his humours, simply because they were his. (His contribution to the household was, it seemed, to be the humours; and how richly he fulfilled the promise.) Yet Jane could not complain. Had he not sketched the prospect to her in forbidding detail? She had made her bargain, and for forty years she gallantly fulfilled it, while *The French Revolution, Heroes, Past and Present, Cromwell, and Frederick* dragged their agonising length across the silent room upstairs. It was his dream fulfilled. The nymph Egeria, perhaps, was satisfied as well. For she could watch him scale Parnassus, lived with each project, heard each chapter read as it was wrung from him. So the nymph saw her dream fulfilled. But Jane was not all Egeria.

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

George Rennie, Robert MacTurk, James Baird, and Robby Angus had known that. Even Carlyle, perhaps, suspected it that afternoon in Haddington, when Irving introduced him and Mrs. Welsh poured out the tea. But if he ever knew, he had forgotten; and to her favoured mortal she was just Egeria, residing (for the King's convenience) in Numa's palace. Nymphs, it is evident, should never leave their groves: at any rate, this nymph discovered that life in her favourite's palace could be more arduous. Egeria's part was more exacting than poor Jane had ever dreamed. Better, perhaps, a lonely flower in Haddington than an over-burdened wife (even with the *rôle* of cunning gypsy) in Cheyne Row.

The chaise rolled on (it was a private carriage now), and Jane sat quietly inside. It drove from Marble Arch to Stanhope Gate, along the Serpentine, and round again to Hyde Park Corner. Carlyle was far away in Scotland for his triumphal installation as Lord Rector of

BONNET AND SHAWL

Edinburgh University. He was an acknowledged sage, the crowned oracle of his day, like all the other sages he had once prescribed to her. Other tutors prescribed his oracles to other Janes; and Jane, an ageing woman now, could count his honours as she sat quietly inside the brougham. The London trees went past the carriage-windows, and Jane sat on. At Hyde Park Corner the coachman pulled up for orders, got none, asked a passing stranger to look inside, and drove hurriedly to St. George's Hospital. Her heart had stopped.

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

ANN [*looking at him with fond pride and caressing his arm*]: *Never mind her, dear. Go on talking.*

MAN AND SUPERMAN.

THE air of 1839 was heavy with impending nuptials. In the bright dawn of a new reign matrimony swept over England like a genial epidemic, and the land was loud with banns. For the Queen's hand was asked and given; and, inspired by this event, a highly representative selection of her subjects moved with an almost simultaneous impulse to the altar. Disraeli and his Mary Anne, Victoria and her Albert, even Lord Palmerston and his delicious Emily prepared for felicity that season. Wedding-bells were universal, and discreet Victorian *amorini* clustered in unseen jubilation above the happy couples. But the cloud

BONNET AND SHAWL

of felicity hung nowhere lower or more richly charged than over Hawarden, where rumour positively announced a double wedding. At the Castle two maidens drooped and two young gentlemen paced the grounds together. The day broke at last, and one bridegroom—the more aquiline of the two—"rose in good time and read the Psalms." The organ pealed; the Dean pronounced the blessing; bands thumped outside; the village children scattered flowers, and cottagers performed obeisances in all directions. For the tale of weddings was complete. The Queen betrothed, Lord Palmerston proposing marriage, Disraeli kneeling with Mrs. Wyndham Lewis at St. George's, Hanover Square, were a mere prelude. Now Mr. Gladstone had received his bride; and the Victorian age was ready to begin.

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

I

The joyful air had a less joyful overture. For courtship, in Mr. Gladstone's hands, became an almost thoughtful mode. The lovers met abroad. They had met before, but not as lovers—once at a dinner-party, where another guest was recalled (after a slightly suspicious interval) to have observed, “Mark that young man ! He will one day be Prime Minister of England ”; once in the echoing austerity of a Handel Commemoration ; and one vacation when he was staying with her brother. He was a young Member of Parliament—Oxford (as someone said) on the surface, but Liverpool below. A priestly appearance was appropriately distinguished by peculiar views upon the Church ; and he had positively written a book about them, which lingered in the press whilst he refreshed his classical allusions with a Sicilian holiday. She was the sister of a college friend. They met in Sicily ; they met

BONNET AND SHAWL

again in the same hotel at Naples, saw sights together, dined a good deal *en famille*, and scaled Vesuvius; and when he left, he entered “this Circean City” in his journal. The allusion, it may be presumed, was rather to the classics than to any enchantress whom he had met there. For Circe was the last title which it would have occurred to Mr. Gladstone to bestow upon Miss Glynne.

They were all in Rome for Christmas; and his reflections took a less pagan turn, as he heard mass with Manning in St. Peter’s or recorded endless Italian sermons in his insatiable diary. But one day he walked with her in Santa Maria Maggiore; and as they looked about them at so much Roman splendour, she was led to compare the meagre equipment of English churches with the ungrudging comfort of English homes. “Do you think,” she asked the dark young man beside her, “we can be justified in indulging ourselves in all these luxuries?” She came, as he did, from a

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

wealthy home. He was a Tory, too; and the answer was, perhaps, a trifle awkward. But the wide-eyed question charmed him; and he recorded it in his all-seeing diary among notes of sermons with the ecstatic comment: “I loved her for this question—how sweet a thing it is to reflect that her heart and will are entirely in the hands of God. May He in this, as in all things, be with her.” For that winter day in Santa Maria Maggiore she had lit a candle that was to burn between them for sixty years.

His next move was less introspective. For the aspiration breathed in the privacy of his journal worked strongly on him; and Mr. Gladstone (even the skittish Muse of intimate biography attempts no more familiar address) offered marriage. He offered it with every scenic advantage that a romantic mood, combined with a classical education, could suggest. For he proposed by moonlight in the Colosseum. “The theme,” as Disraeli wickedly

BONNET AND SHAWL

remarked of someone else, “ the poet, the speaker ”—and (may one add ?) the setting—“ what a felicitous combination ! ” But Miss Glynne, sadly negligent of a historic opportunity, was unresponsive. One more classical allusion had fallen flat ; and the Colosseum, still conscious of its unenviable place in Christian tradition, made one martyr more. The martyred wooer left for England. But by a laudable precaution he took with him the brother of his fair executioner ; and the sister’s letters breathed a suspicious interest in “ Già ” and “ Già’s ” book on Church and State and her meetings with “ Già’s ” great friend, Manning. She even employed this helpful medium to answer “ Già’s ” letters to herself—“ I appreciate very much the generous feelings which are expressed in his letter to me. . . . I cannot take Michael Angelo’s beautiful sonnet to myself, but the sentiments contained in it are so lofty, it was impossible not to read it without the greatest delight. Please read this

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

yourself to Già, as I particularly want the message to be given exactly.” There was a watchful postscript : “ Tell me how you get through my message to Già and any rebound. Nothing could express more honourable feelings and taste than the letter he wrote me.” Meanwhile the lover was confiding to his journal a dejected sense of his undue precipitation, stupidity, and general unworthiness, or attending committee meetings with undiminished zeal. That year the National Schools Enquiry claimed him, to say nothing of the committees of the Additional Curates Fund, the Church Commercial School, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and Church Building in the Metropolis, and the more secular affairs of the Carlton Club library and the Oxford and Cambridge Club. He even found time for a perusal of *Nicholas Nickleby*, which he found “ very human ; it is most happy in touches of natural pathos. No church in the book, and the motives are not those of religion.”

BONNET AND SHAWL

But Mr. Gladstone, though suffering from no lack of church, was human, too; and his meetings with Miss Glynne were rigorously resumed in London. They met at every hour and in every part of the town—at dinner-time in Berkeley Square, on horseback, even at breakfast with the poet Rogers. His journal still desponded. Even his father became the recipient of his despairs. But one afternoon they all drove down to Fulham for Lady Shelley's garden-party. There, Thames proving more auspicious than Tiber, his desire was granted. For as they walked apart, she yielded and “my Catherine gave me herself.” The mood of her surrender left nothing to be desired. She breathed a lofty piety; and in return the happy lover offered, as a *gage d'amour*, four lines of Dante. They even called on the Archbishop, whose official embrace was gratefully recorded by a proud *fiancé*. Then they plunged into a happy whirl of family visits, further complicated by a second engagement

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

in the family. For her sister, after becoming hesitations, had yielded to the entreaties of Lord Lyttleton. She was “much overcome, and hid her face in Catherine’s bosom; then they fled away for a little,” while Gladstone did his best to compose the agitated peer. So Hawarden was to have its double wedding. The couples drove about together, read aloud, or struggled with the endless complexities of sorting out the sisters’ property. There was so much to plan—their future lives, the fireworks, entertainments for the wedding guests, and eternity for one another, to say nothing of a pair of honeymoons and something for the village children.

The summer weeks flowed by, until the morning came when they were married in the mating world of 1839. The occasion, it must be confessed, was not lacking in emphasis. For the wedding carriages were followed to church by a notable procession recorded in the *Chester Chronicle* :—

BONNET AND SHAWL

Band

The Hawarden Castle Lodge of Odd Fellows.

Band

Hawarden Temperance Societies.

Band.

Benefit Societies.

Band

Tradespeople in large numbers.

The bridegrooms, deafened but happy, drove in the sixth carriage; and it is scarcely to be wondered at that Lyttleton, always a little apt to be upset, broke down again. Even Gladstone was unstrung. His unerring diary attributed it to the music: indeed, it was a wedding-march that might have shaken stronger nerves. So the happy couples were floated to felicity on floods of tears. For a slightly emotional piety seemed to prevail. Besides, in 1839 the age of sensibility was not so distant.

Even the honeymoon retained something of the dual character of that stupendous wedding. The smiling pairs were separated for a fortnight or so; and in an ecstasy of good intentions

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

Gladstone, alone with Catherine, conversed on the fallibility of private judgments, on amusements, on the sanctity of time, on Sunday observance and the relation of charity to private expenditure. He prized his treasure highly; but in the very act he seemed to test her precious metal in the fires of improving conversation. At intervals he read the classics. But early the next month they were all back at Hawarden once again for “a beautiful meeting between the sisters” and the less spiritual delights of a servants’ ball; and then the wedding tour started in earnest. This time two bridal carriages left for the coast; two pairs embarked for Greenock; and as they drove through Scotland, the obedient Highlands unfolded all their romance. Sometimes, indeed, they went half-way to meet it in full Highland costume, dressed somewhat unaccountably in Lennox tartan, each bride upon a Highland pony and each bridegroom striding attentively beside a pony’s head. There was a happy

BONNET AND SHAWL

interlude behind the Scotch Baronial battlements of Mr. Gladstone's northern home, where everyone played a great deal of chess and the family circle was completed by the arrival of an unmarried brother-in-law. Then more excursions past Braemar and Ballater, still unconscious of the impending glories of Balmoral. But Lyttleton went south at last; and the Gladstones were alone for solitary chess and billiards—"C. and I in deadly conflict—too great an expenditure, perhaps, of thought and interest"—and endless leisure for reading Scott and Trench and Keble, to say nothing of the Bishop of London on Education and annotating Rothe's *Anfange der Christlichen Kirche*. A round of visits carried them to Christmas; and as the new year opened, they were moving into Carlton House Terrace. It was near the House of Commons, still nearer to the Carlton Club, and quite near enough to the Sunday school at Bedfordbury, where Mr. Gladstone taught. Rules were drawn up to

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

guide the household, and the first bookcase was put up with due solemnity; the servants' library was chosen with immense deliberation; district-visiting began; and in the ordered virtue of her home Catherine prepared for sixty years with Mr. Gladstone.

II

The sequel was not quite expected. It was easy to foresee a lifetime of devotion, with two figures steadily receding down the long avenue of public life, and two heads growing grey together. For she was bound to fulfil the lyrical prophecy of their best man at the wedding and to

soothe in many a toil-worn hour
The noble heart that thou hast won.

* * *

Be thou a balmy breeze to him,
A fountain singing at his side:
A star, whose light is never dim,
A pillar, to uphold and guide.

BONNET AND SHAWL

(Such predictions are the natural penalty of inviting the Professor of Poetry to officiate as groomsman.) And the appointed *rôle* was nobly performed. Two generations of delighted 'Liberals watched the slim figure follow him down the cheering lanes of public meetings, steady him as he climbed on to innumerable platforms, tug off his coat, and sit demurely folding it as the big voice in front (with a suspicion of Liverpool about it) settled inimitably into the first, deep "Mr. Chairman and fellow-electors." The House of Commons knew what hand had filled the "short, thick-set pomatum-pot, oval in shape, four inches in height," from which those eloquent lips drew intermittent (and slightly mysterious) refreshment, when the cheers gave a convenient pause: and an eye raised to the Ladies' Gallery might catch a glimpse of an eager face that looked down at him, had watched unwaveringly, indeed, since distant evenings before the Corn Laws were repealed, when "I found myself nearly upon

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

Lady John Russell's lap, with Lady Palmerston and other wives," and was still watching as he crouched, half a century away, beside the faithful Morley for a spring at the apostate Chamberlain. A Member once inquired why a small section of the brass grille in front shone so brightly, and was informed by the attendant that Mrs. Gladstone's hand had polished it. She pinned the tea-rose in his coat, contrived the endless complications of a migratory politician's life (a niece testified to "the manœuvres behind his back, the extraordinary dodges to smooth his path or oil his wheels or cocker up his health"), and was occasionally suspected of offering a hand to be shaken under his cape by eager (but exhausting) Liberals. The Professor of Poetry had invited her to be her husband's fountain and (for the matter of that) his star. But far more often she performed the humbler, though more useful, functions of his screen. There was so much to screen him from—his own unresting energy,

BONNET AND SHAWL

hosts of supporters, anxious colleagues, and the dreadful irregularities of a politician's diet. One day in the Midlothian election they paid a call just after lunch; tea was produced but, as he had a speech to make at three o'clock, respectfully declined; a cautious hand replaced it on the hob; the meeting opened, and the electors were informed of Lord Beaconsfield's iniquities at becoming length; the afternoon wore on, until the orator returned and the same hospitable hand offered the dubious refreshment of the same tea. Queen Eleanor, one feels, would have consumed the deadly brew and fallen at her husband's feet. But Mrs. Gladstone was more skilful. She let him take the cup, then sidled past and got it somehow underneath her mantle; a sudden admiration of the view drew her towards a window; and the Lowland landscape drank the Lowland tea. Small wonder that he adored her for a lifetime passed (as an artful hand has diagnosed it) in "feeding a god on beef-tea."

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

Not that her *rôle* was secondary. When she married, a cheerful friend offered congratulations on having someone at last to write her letters for her, and she made endless use of him —“ Could you order some tooth-brushes and brushes *cheap* for the Orphanage? ” “ Have you remembered to peep in on the Miss D.’s? Only open the boudoir door and you will find them.” “ Did you manage the flowers (or grapes) for Mrs. Bagshawe? She lives quite near Portland Place.” “ If you have *time*, please bring down a little present for my three-year-old godchild; there are beautiful Bible prints at the Sanctuary, Westminster, and also we want a common easel from the same place, 5s. to 8s. 6d., to hold the big maps for the boys.” Schoolroom easels, Bible prints, tooth-brushes, flowers, and the socially desolate Miss D.’s were all to be fitted somehow into the hunted life of a Prime Minister along with Ireland, Egypt, and the Liberal Party, to say nothing of an uneasy Sovereign, Homer, and

BONNET AND SHAWL

his own perpetual anxiety on points of Church discipline.

So Catherine was more—much more—than a lieutenant, a mere blank numbered oval in the group of supporters clustering behind him. A less distinctive wife, one feels, must have developed features of her own in the solitude of life with a public man, who habitually worked fourteen hours a day when in office. But even without this discipline Catherine was quite unmistakable. The two sisters of the famous double wedding had been known as “the Pussies”; and her engaging quality seems to survive in the affectionate persistence of the nickname. For, mated with the sterner figure of “Uncle William,” she remained “Aunty Pussy” to two devoted generations; and young people do not nickname great-aunts for nothing. Besides, she was a Glynne. The Glynnes were good; but under all their goodness there resided a redeeming streak of oddity. It expressed itself in a cheerful

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

inconsequence, in an abiding taste for nicknames; and portmanteau words and the etymological eccentricities of an elaborate family dialect. Catherine was an arch-Glynne, presiding imperturbably over vast Biblical migrations of innumerable Lyttleton and Gladstone children and their countless attendants, that ended in triumph on the devastated floors of Hawarden or Hagley, where a sardonic brother once recorded “ those great confluences of families which occur among the Glynnese,” with the agreeable turmoil of “ seventeen children there under the age of twelve, and consequently all inkstands, books, furniture, and ornaments in intimate intermixture, and in every form of fracture and confusion.” That was her *milieu*; and she revelled in it. Whilst Uncle William went on his majestic way, she ran breathlessly behind in a splendid whirl of nephews, missed appointments, and wild domestic improvisations. A devoted niece admired “the astonishing intricacy of her arrange-

BONNET AND SHAWL

ments, the dovetailing and never-ceasing attempts to fit in things which could and wouldn't fit." She told him once to his marmoreal face what a bore he would have been, if he had married somebody as tidy as himself. The contrast was complete—the People's William, intent upon his stately progress, and his Catherine careering alongside with her gay assumption that "you were always ready to fall in with her and dovetail, and swap butlers, and supply meals, beds, cooks, or carriages at a moment's notice," and her endless trail of little notes, written on scraps with broken pens and generously smudged, each "i" without its dot, each "t" uncrossed, and every period lacking its punctuation.

The very contrast made her more adorable than ever. With Mr. Gladstone sitting by, how could anyone resist the sweet inconsequence that once feelingly complained to a startled lunch-party at Windsor of the intolerable tedium of captivity for a notorious burglar—

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

“ But, oh, how dull he will be—conceive the utter dullness of a prison ” ! Hers was the bright, uncomprehending eye that looked up at someone asking if, when she said that a will had been “ declared *vull*,” she meant “ null and void ” ; and hers the soothing explanation, “ No, dear, I always say *vull*.” That, surely, was the school at which Mr. Gladstone learned to sing plantation melodies or waltz swaying round the hearthrug to the disreputable catch, sung in duet :

A ragamuffin husband and a rantipoling wife,
We'll fiddle it and scrape it through the ups and
downs of life.

The song and dance are highly unlike him ; but they were very like Catherine indeed. For, to their great advantage, she remained more Glynne than Gladstone.

Not that levity was, in any sense, her principal component. For the Glynnnes were good ; and goodness, for Catherine, meant something more than formal piety or regular attendance

BONNET AND SHAWL

at public worship. That element, though, was never absent, as a startled modern may infer from the delicious entry in her diary—"Engaged a cook, after a long conversation on religious matters, chiefly between her and William." But her piety found its expression far beyond family prayers and the servants' hall. Sometimes, indeed, her benefactions had a fine inconsequence, with ailing school-teachers packed suddenly to Hawarden, wings hurriedly carved off at table and despatched post-haste to the village—"and let it go hot to Miss R. at once." But her good works could be no less systematic. The House of Charity in Soho and the Newport Market Refuge were her abiding passion, with Mrs. Gladstone for their indomitable almoner, committee-man, and maid of all work. She was perpetually chasing off from Downing Street into the East End or to her Convalescent Home at Woodford. Startled electors saw the Premier's wife alight from third-class carriages

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

at inexplicable stations; and her days were a delirious round of workhouses and hospitals, punctuated by official parties and her endless vigil in the Ladies' Gallery. They missed her once from Hawarden after morning prayers: she was off after a typhoid case, had put her patient in the train, took her to Chester, left her installed in hospital, and was home in time for tea and an enormous charade of grandchildren. Small wonder that when someone at the height of the cholera epidemic saw a lady busily engaged in bundling babies in blankets out of the London Hospital and asked who she might be, the reply was "Mrs. Gladstone." Some of the rescued infants even found their way to the august official attics of Downing Street. But she was still busy in the stricken wards, walking them quite as fearlessly as any Lady with a Lamp.

Hawarden itself was full of her—her Orphanage, that had its birth in the Lancashire cotton famine, and the smaller home first opened for

BONNET AND SHAWL

a knot of London cholera orphans. She even partnered her husband in the heroic embarrassments of his rescue work. A startled friend once asked him, "What will Mrs. Gladstone say if you take this woman home?" And the deep voice replied, "Why, it is to Mrs. Gladstone I am taking her." For when they reigned there, Downing Street saw strange encounters; and her urchins matched his Magdalenes. Each of the partners led the other on. She even led him into the composition of lyric verse upon minor items of intelligence from her Convalescent Hcme. He was a secret rhymer of considerable ardour and pursued with gusto the poetical problems presented by the style of Messrs. Parkins & Gotto and the no less unusually named bride of his last Home Secretary,

**And by sea or by land, I will swear you may go far
Before you can hit on a double for Margot.**

But few Liberals believed their monumental leader capable of greeting with verse his wife's announcement of the happy news from Wood-

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

ford that “ the cook and the Captain are going to be married.” He received the intelligence with one of his deepest silences ; and she complained in wifely irony, “ Oh, of course, you are too full of Homer and your old gods and goddesses to care—stupid of me ! ” But an abstracted hand had reached for a sheet of paper ; the pen—the slightly portentous pen of *The State in its Relation with the Church and Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*—moved rapidly across the page ; and she was presented with a highly indecorous epithalamium, from its spirited opening,

The Cook and the Captain determined one day,
When worthy Miss Simmons was out of the way,
On splicing together a life and a life,
The one as a husband, the other as wife—

to its riotous conclusion,

Miss Simmons came home and she shouted, “ O dear !
What riot is this ? What the d——l is here ?
If the Cook and the Captain will not be quiescent,
What can I expect from each Convalescent ? ”
Fol de rol, fol de rol, fol de rol la.

BONNET AND SHAWL

He wrote it just to please her ; and one may guess from the light-hearted scrap how much she helped to keep him human.

For, after all, he was the greatest (and, perhaps, the best) of her good works. There was his life to be arranged, his innumerable comings and goings to be contrived, the silence to be kept round his work, and all the blows to deaden which adversaries aim at politicians, though they mostly fall upon their wives. It was easy enough to stand smiling at his side and watch the cheering crowds—and then he could always think of such wonderful things to say to them, although she had to stop him once until the reporter could get near enough to hear. But the silent hours were not so easy, when he was sleeping badly, or the incorrigible Disraeli seemed to flourish like the green bay-tree, or his own friends began to fail him. That was when she stretched a shielding arm above him to take the blows ; and he began to fear them more for her than for himself. For the un-

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

varying alternation of success and failure had hardened him. His life had been like a deep excavation where defeat and recovery seemed to lie in geological layers, one above the other, over an almost geological period of time.

But one day the alternation ended, since recovery is more than doubtful for a resigning Premier of eighty-three; and as he faced the prospect, he became a coward for her. For when his last Cabinet had rounded with infinite solicitude upon the leader whom they were prepared to worship, but not to follow, he dared not take home the news. Morley must tell her; Morley was always serviceable; he should sham tired himself and pass the ball to Morley. So Morley dined at Downing Street; and after dinner, while the others played backgammon, she led the anguished Morley to a sofa, "behind an ornamental glass screen." Mr. G. had told her that he was fagged and that Morley would report how matters stood. And there on the sofa, while the two old gentle-

BONNET AND SHAWL

men rattled their dice beyond the screen, he told her. She was quite unprepared, as the blow fell.

Not quite the last, though. She was alone for that in the vast Abbey, where she left him; and the watching crowds saw the hope living in her eyes, as “she went in like a widow, she came out like a bride.” And in a year and a few weeks she joined him, dutiful as ever, with a murmur of “I must not be late for church.” Indeed, she was not.

MARY ARNOLD

MARY ARNOLD

*In the days when twenty fellows drank out of one large mug
And pewter were the dishes and a tin can was the jug ;
In the days when shoes and boots were three times a week
japanned,
And we sat on stools, not sofas—there were giants in the
land.*

RUGBY MAGAZINE.

WE will meet her, if you please, after the due preliminaries. Parted from sorrowing relations with tears and good advice and unusual quantities of luggage, left overnight at the Peacock, Islington, we will sup manfully (as befits a young gentleman just starting on his travels) off steak and oyster-sauce washed down by the very brownest stout in a corner of the coffee-room. Retiring early, we will repel with proper indignation the efforts of sentimental chamber-maids to call us a little

BONNET AND SHAWL

darling and (*proh pudor!*) kiss us good-night. Then we will dream of home and London streets miraculously lit with gas and post-boys and "Peelers" in their novel uniforms and ostlers and shop-windows, until disturbed at something before three in the morning with information that the Tally-ho for Leicester will be round in half an hour and don't wait for nobody. (The Tally-ho, it seems, is best for our purpose, since it goes straight to our destination, while the other coaches set down at Dunchurch; besides, the Tally-ho is by report a tip-top goer—ten miles an hour, including stops—and sets every clock between Islington and Leicester by its punctual horn.) And punctually enough the tip-top goer clatters up. Boots' head, inserted through the coffee-room door, ejaculates "Tally-ho, sir"; the leaders stamp outside in the night frost; Guard drops off and slaps himself across the chest, inquiring briskly, "Anything for us, Bob?" We tumble out; and as we tie a comforter, an

MARY ARNOLD

ostler somewhere in the darkness pronounces the sublime viaticum—" Young genl'm'n, Rugby; three parcels, Leicester; hamper o' game, Rugby."

The overture was harsh, perhaps, but not without its melody. Even a small exile might find his compensations on "a fast coach in November, in the reign of his late majesty." For as the horn announced the tip-top goer to recumbent Islington, two small, attentive ears observed (though very cold) the spanking leaders and the nearer jingle of the wheelers tuned by the ringing turnpike to a single note, and two small, attentive eyes followed the shifting glare of coach-lamps on the night mist that would pale presently into a breaking day. After three hours or so the punctual dawn, though not noticeably rosy-fingered, unfolded on the grateful subjects of King William IV (or his youthful niece); and all along the road England dutifully awoke according to its station. Shutters fell by magic from shop-

BONNET AND SHAWL

windows; door-steps were scrubbed; vast hunting-breakfasts got themselves consumed by sportsmen; labourers plodded to work in smocks; the first market carts came by; gentlemen in pink jogged cheerfully to meet the hounds; and Guard became steadily more communicative. At this stage the young exile begins to acquire extensive (and not wholly reliable) information on the subject of Rugby and the young gentlemen of Rugby and their alarming goings-on—how scandalously free they are with whips and pea-shooters and cricket-bats and other weapons of offence, living, it seems, in a state of indiscriminate warfare with all navvies, farmers and every variety of peaceful wayfarers; how they poach, climb trees, and indulge in the rewarding, but reprehensible, pastime of removing lynch-pins from the wheels of gigs left unprotected outside public-houses; how (slightly terrifying compensation) extremely stern the Doctor is, and, on occasion, capable of sending off three of his

MARY ARNOLD

young gentlemen, each in a po'-chay with a parish constable; and how those are two of them, waiting with tightly buttoned jackets to race the coach to the next mile-stone.

Changing emotions sweep the novice, like wind across a corn-field. Home has receded now; even the Peacock at Islington is a mere distant memory of stout and oyster-sauce; and as they bowl along between the hedgerows, the whole world is filled with their approaching destination—with Rugby and its mysterious denizens and their presiding Doctor. The road continues to unwind, until a hill climbs up the sky, the coach climbs up the hill, and from the brow of it two small, attentive eyes observe a line of buildings between the giant elms of a vast playing-field. So his first sight of Rugby is an ample foreground with a few scattered figures kicking footballs about and a hint of battlements, that soon range themselves in order as the School, the School House, and the Doctor's wall. They take the corner on a wheel

BONNET AND SHAWL

or so ; a highly feudal gate recessed beneath an oriel window (that, though he does not know it yet, is where the Doctor exhorts his Sixth) affords, as they flash past, a sudden perspective of grey quadrangle and a few lounging boys ; and Rugby, that does not seem to know it either, holds him for the next half-year—holds him, perhaps, for as long as memory remains to him.

Slightly forlorn, her latest son enters upon uncharted seas and, trying his hardest not to think of home, navigates the dark complexities of the School House. The matron's room becomes his haven, presently invaded by the alarming senior whose study he is to share. For some higher power has, it seems, ordained it so ; and the same power in a kindlier mood summons them to take tea in its Olympian regions. So they march off together, stumble across a hall, and stand presently in a big drawing-room that seems to be all windows, where they are confronted with a boy or so,

MARY ARNOLD

assorted children, and a man with quick, dark eyes and a fine shock of hair, whom general deference proclaims to be the Doctor. But the Providence which had prescribed that they should share a study and then summoned them to tea, the presiding deity of this Olympus, was seated graciously behind a tea-table; and in her smile of welcome they almost forgot to stumble. So, with the due preliminaries fulfilled, we sit down to tea with Mrs. Arnold.

II

She was not always a queen regnant. Headmasters' wives rise to their eminence by slow degrees; and her ascent took the best part of forty years. For the first thirty she adorned her father's rectory in Nottinghamshire, while Thomas Arnold passed through the various stages by which "Political Tommy" grew

BONNET AND SHAWL

into “Black Tom.” She started in the race five years in front of him; and she was nearly nine years old when he began to watch the chequered sides of Nelson’s line-of-battleships out of his father’s windows in the Isle of Wight. She had turned eleven when his father died with slightly ominous suddenness; and as she grew, he went to Winchester, went on to Oxford, and out into the world. She had a brother at Winchester as well, who went to Corpus with him; and the Penroses were inevitably entertained with tales of his prowess—of the “most glorious Scrape” that he got into for playing loo (and for silver, too) although he was a prefect, of bathing-parties on the Cher, and the terrific Jacobin orations with which he scared Oxford in the Attic Debating Society. The two Wykehamists, divorced by fate from their appointed pastures in New College, clung close to one another at Corpus; and as the Arnolds were regaled with stories of Tom’s college friend, Trevenen Penrose, the Penroses in their

MARY ARNOLD

Nottinghamshire rectory heard a good deal about Tom Arnold. Perhaps the rector did not always listen; but Mary, one feels, was most attentive. Besides, she was past twenty now, and even in country rectories the best-conducted sisters are not above encouraging a brother to speak of college friends.

So she knew all about him and his speeches and his First in Greats and his slightly ill-regulated taste for “a skirmish across the country” and his Fellowship at Oriel. Whilst he climbed fences, fell into ditches, or sat in Oriel common room to hear old Whateley’s logic, she kept her faithful vigil in the rectory and watched the Trent go by and did her best to be content with the meagre social resources of Fledborough. But the dread milestone of her thirtieth birthday began to loom ahead. Meanwhile, his academic stream flowed smoothly, with an abundance of Herodotus and Thucydides and his own “dear old Stagyrite.” Its level waters were scarcely ruffled, when he was ordained

BONNET AND SHAWL

deacon; although he knew a spell of mental agony a few months later, as he faced his priesthood and the dark enigma of the Trinity. Not that he really doubted. But he felt his mental processes to be somewhat unfairly embarrassed by his prospects. The thought that his career required an affirmative conclusion, that “the bias is so strong upon him to decide one way from interest,” weighed terribly upon him; for he was frankly disinclined to solve the problem by the drastic (though practical) recipe of a more worldly friend who, destined for the law, advised the violent suppression of all inconvenient doubts. But, on the whole, his course was smooth enough; and for a year or so the young Fellow of Oriel floated with the stream. The peace of Oxford, subtlest of Nirvanas, brooded round him; and in its cosy air he almost seemed to droop, to head in limp contentment for a cycle of Cathay—of walks in Bagley Wood, of college port and textual criticism—until he

MARY ARNOLD

swerved abruptly towards his crowded hour of glorious life.

He ached to live; and life, for an unmarried Fellow living in college, is an attenuated thing at best. Something was stirring in him; and Oxford in 1819 was singularly uncongenial to stirrings of any kind. Pure scholarship, it seemed, was not enough; a life-time spent in hunting Orelli and putting Poppo in his place left him somehow unsatisfied, although he never lost his taste for the controversial broad-sword. But footnotes, however sprightly, were no substitute for life. Men lived in homes, not in *apparatus criticus*; and he had no home. The thought of Mary Penrose (and in 1819 he thought of her frequently) made him feel more homeless than ever. A home and Mary soon became the sum of his aspirations. Besides, he ached to teach as well—and how could he teach anything in Oxford except the answers to examination-questions? There was a blind desire in him to educate. But one could teach

BONNET AND SHAWL

so little in a lecture-room. True education implied a closer contact than any Fellow could possibly maintain with college pupils. It seemed that education, no less than Mary, called for a home. For if he was to do his duty by them, he must take pupils in his house and prepare them, body and soul, for something higher than the Class Lists. That was his aim in education—to stimulate “1st, religious and moral principles; 2ndly, gentlemanly conduct; 3rdly, intellectual ability.” (The order in which he wrote down his objectives challenged the whole existing scheme of English education and was the formula by which eventually he remade the Public Schools.) So everything—his vague stirrings, Mary, the higher education—pointed in one direction: he must get out of college somehow and into a house. Pupils were easy enough to come by; but he must have a house. There he might earn enough for Mary and practise his ideals of education.

The call was clear enough, although two

MARY ARNOLD

voices mingled in it. A convenient brother-in-law, who kept a school near Staines, offered to join forces with him; and at the joyful prospect of a house and some real schoolmastering he flung Oxford to the winds. The little staff at Laleham was promptly reinforced by the arrival of himself, his family, and all his books. Now he could have his pupils in the house. He had his aunt as well, to say nothing of his mother and an ailing sister. But still the house seemed to lack something. He had not come to Laleham merely to propel small boys through the flatter regions of *Eutropius*; and with a happy gesture of completion he brought home a wife.

His bride was Mary Penrose. No one, it may be presumed, was very much surprised. The association was an old one, and it seemed to have the loftiest sanction. For Wykehamists stand with an added confidence at the altar with the sisters of other Wykehamists. Besides, young clergymen were quite expected

BONNET AND SHAWL

to take to matrimony with their holy orders. So their world was not surprised; neither was Thomas; and Mary at thirty was long past surprises. They married in the gay summer weeks of 1820, when their fellow-subjects derived unlimited entertainment from the spectacle of their egregious sovereign locked in his preposterous conflict with Queen Caroline; London was loud with breaking glass; peers listened to the evidence and nudged one another; and in the country Thomas Arnold was bringing home his bride. It was no part of his design that the flower of Fledborough should bloom alone. For he transplanted her to Laleham; and the same hospitable soil sustained his aunt, his mother, and his sisters, married and invalid. She played her own part, though. For brides of thirty united with bridegrooms of twenty-five may be relied on to assert themselves. A more youthful wife, one feels, might far more easily have faded into the rich domestic background and become a graceful

MARY ARNOLD

detail of the family scene. But Mary Penrose was a grown woman. She had her ways as well and set out boldly to be the family historian. Thomas might write his ancient history each evening. But Mary, with ampler (and far more reliable) documents, compiled the record of the household—its daily doings and his choicest sayings, together with selections from his more judicious letters and newspaper comments on his latest pamphlet. Was she not a niece by marriage of the redoubtable Mrs. Markham? That daughter of the Muses chronicled, with becoming decorum, the fall of empires. But nieces, no less than aunts, may be moved to historical composition; and Mary's efforts were not unworthy of her austere relative, whom Clio visited in ringlets.

Not that she played a passive part. He loved her deeply; and the influence of a loved woman is rarely negligible. Indeed, his love for her had quite palpably counted for a great deal in his sudden impulse to abandon Oxford and

BONNET AND SHAWL

teach school. She was the star by which he steered in his first voyage; and as he plied a labouring oar at Laleham, his dreams were all of her. Laleham, indeed, was anything but Capua for a Fellow of Oriel. The narrow circle and the little house were a high price to pay. It was easy enough for him to write that “it does my mind a marvellous deal of good, or ought to do, to be kept upon bread and water.” But sometimes he seemed to feel his exile; and then, in the first months at Lalcham, he thought his very hardest of the goal—“ Be the price that I am paying much or little, I cannot forget for what I am paying it.” It was for Mary; and he was almost scared by “ the fear that this earthly happiness may interest me too deeply. The hold which a man’s affections have on him is the more dangerous because the less suspected; and one may become an idolater almost before one feels the least sense of danger. Then comes the fear of losing the treasure, which one may love too fondly;

MARY ARNOLD

and that fear is indeed horrible. The thought of the instability of one's happiness comes in well to interrupt its full indulgence. . . ." A strange confession for a wooer; but that he was an ardent wooer is undoubted. So Mary, it seems, was no small part of the motives which took him from Oxford and set him teaching parlour-boarders in the tiny school at Laleham.

She took her share as well. For his system, as a later critic saw it, was always to make " his school a family, his family a school." However trying for his family (and they rewarded their beloved Headmaster with unvarying devotion), the process was highly beneficial to the school; since it served to mitigate the savage warfare that prevailed almost universally between masters and pupils by the milder influences of the drawing-room. " It tends," he wrote, " to humanise them "; and the humanising drawing-room, at Laleham and afterwards at Rugby, was Mary's. They came in at tea-time and stayed to talk and look at prints

BONNET AND SHAWL

and play backgammon, or sat with them all the evening. No unmarried schoolmaster can use the drawing-room as an instrument of education. There must be someone else there to pour out the tea and reassure nervous newcomers. So Mrs. Arnold grew to be an essential part of the Arnold system.

She seemed to enjoy it, too. Ambitious friends wrote to complain of his Boeotian retirement and reprove him for using a razor to cut blocks with in his Lilliputian academy for the sons of gentlemen. But he wrapped himself in the deep felicity of Lalcham, revelled in unlimited opportunities to bathe and go for endless rambles and wear old clothes or indulge in wild gymnastics, or revealed that "both M. and myself are so entirely happy." Yet when the time came to make a change, his family tastes played a decisive part once more. One is so accustomed to the vision of Arnold steering exclusively by the chilly star of education that it is strange to see him positively refuse a

MARY ARNOLD

mastership at Winchester, and stranger still to see him accept Rugby on the purest grounds of family advantage. “ We had married,” as Mary faithfully records, “ with a considerable debt, which about this time we contrived to pay off, but our expenses were increasing faster than our income, and when all had been well weighed, it was decided to stand for Rugby.” There were the children now; and their education seemed likely to cost more than a lifetime of parlour-boarders could ever earn for him at Lalcham. So he put in for Rugby.

Yet his motives were not all prudential. The work drew him, too, though his eye for country was sadly offended by the indecent nudity of Warwickshire after the rich *décor* of Staines. Was not education his main business in life? And not his alone. For he had come to think of Mary as his fellow-worker in the vineyard. She was thirty-eight, of course; and to thirty-three the maturity of thirty-eight can

BONNET AND SHAWL

never play the part of Dora, of the girl-wife, of the docile hand that merely holds the pens and strokes the heated brow. Besides, she played her part. Was not her drawing-room itself a formidable portion of his educational apparatus? Writing to a friend in the weeks following his election, he announced that "both M. and myself, I think, are well inclined to commence our work." How many school-masters in 1828 viewed their wives as fellow-workers? Here is, perhaps, a neglected secret of the Arnold system, a clue, it may be, to the formula by which they made Rugby a patch of homely decency upon the slightly raffish face of Melbourne's England. For Mrs. Arnold in the School House at Rugby was his effective partner. Her touch was needed in the process of making "his school a family," since the family can scarcely function without a touch of matriarchy. She was the matriarch; her edict allocated studies; she helped to solve the delicate problems of study-partnerships in the

MARY ARNOLD

School House (did not the matron break the news to Tom that he was “ to have Gray’s study, Mrs. Arnold says,” and, by Mrs. Arnold’s wish, to share it with the little Arthur?); and for a half-year at a time her drawing-room was the home-circle for the tribes which gathered at Rugby. So it was not surprising that *Tom Brown* should carry in his heart “ the lady who presided there ” and record with a touch of almost Macaulayan eloquence how “ many is the brave heart now doing its work and bearing its load in country curacies, London chambers, under the Indian sun, and in Australian towns and clearings, which looks back with fond and grateful memory to that School House drawing-room, and dates much of its highest and best training to the lessons learnt there.”

That was her work; and she did it manfully, whilst her indomitable Doctor pushed out his under-lip and wrestled with unruly boys, Tractarians, school Governors, German commenta-

BONNET AND SHAWL

tors, scholiasts, Quarterly Reviewers, and parents. They had the Sixth, in fours, to dinner; they even followed her into the holidays. Then there was all his sober happiness to be arranged, which left him wondering “what men do in middle life, without a wife and children to turn to.” Buried deep in “a home filled with those whom we entirely love and sympathise with,” he could spend himself in the incredible exertions of his life of scholarship and controversy and schoolmastering. He was completely happy, and much of his happiness was of her making. Perhaps she was a little tired sometimes, as her pony ambled round their evening walk and he strode along beside her. He was always most particular about her pony—it should, if possible, be grey and “very small, very quiet, very sure-footed, and able to walk more than four miles an hour.” For he hated loitering. The quiet lanes about Rugby saw them on their evening round—through the Headmaster’s gate and past the school, then out of

MARY ARNOLD

Rugby by the Dunchurch Road to Bilton, and home along the Bilton Road—and as they went, he told her all about Niebuhr and Newmanites and the flowers along the hedges and how the *Northampton Herald* was at him again for his Radical opinions and what the rascal Hook had written in last week's *John Bull* about "smirking, smiling, good-natured Tom Arnold," that harbinger of revolution concealed beneath the broadcloth of "a political parson . . . scribbling to papers when he should be attending to business."* The uneventful fields of Warwickshire lay in the evening light, as the strange couple passed along between the hedges—a voluble, bright-eyed pedestrian with his watchful cavalier—until the Bilton Road brought them to Rugby once again. Unnumbered rooks wheeled unmelodiously above the big elms in the Close, and the tall trees stood in their islands of deep shadow upon its green expanse. Lamps shone out in the Headmaster's house; and he was soon back in his turret

BONNET AND SHAWL

study, amongst his children and his boys, deep in the home that Mary made for all of them.

She had another home as well. For they escaped sometimes from the unheroic landscape of the Midlands—"no hills," as he lamented, "no plains—not a single wood, and but one single copse: no heath—no down—no rock—no river—no clear stream—scarcely any flowers, for the lias is particularly poor in them—nothing but one endless monotony of inclosed fields and hedgerow trees." But at joyful intervals, when term was over, the rooks were left in solitary possession of the Close and they fled to Westmorland to revel soberly in the soft greys and greens of Lakeland. He had all a plainsman's delight in hill-country, and its fervour is nowhere more apparent than in the mounting pulse with which he entered in his journal the approach to Rydal after a holiday abroad :

"Arrived at Bowness, 8.20. Left it at 8.31. Passing Ragrigg Gate, 8.37. On the Bowness terrace,

MARY ARNOLD

8.45. Over Troutbeck Bridge, 8.51. Here is Eccle-rigg, 8.58. And here Lowood Inn, 9.4½. And here Waterhead and our ducking bench, 9.12. The valley opens—Ambleside, and Rydal Park, and the gallery on Loughrigg. Rotha Bridge, 9.16. And here is the poor humbled Rotha, and Mr. Brancker's cut, and the New Millar Bridge, 9.21. Alas ! for the alders gone and succeeded by a stiff wall. Here is the Rotha in his own beauty, and here is poor T. Flemming's Field, and our own mended gate. Dearest children, may we meet happily. Entered FOX HOW, and the birch copse at 9.25, and here ends journal."

It had been a joy to the returning traveller to feel " the unspeakable delight of being once again in our beloved country, with our English Church and English Law." But the little house among the trees at Ambleside was happiness itself, where he could walk up hills or slide on frozen lakes while Mary decorously sat her pony or went about her household business or trotted in to the post-office to fetch the letters. Not that he fled from school. For Rugby followed them; and Sixth Form boys were asked to stay and join their rambles. But there were other friends in Westmorland. Words-worth had found the site for him (and what a

BONNET AND SHAWL

site it was, with a broad window on the noble cleft of Rydal Beck); and, as a dalesman said, “he was ter’ble friends with the Doctor and Master Southey and Wilson of Elleray and old Hartley Coleridge.” Mary called at Rydal Mount one morning and was favoured by a terrific recitation of the new-born sonnet with which the poet resisted the extension of the railway to Windermere—

Is there no nook of English ground secure
From rash assault?

Southey, a rather trying visitor, was there sometimes; and Hartley Coleridge was considerably embarrassed by an offer of water, where he had looked for beer. But Wordsworth was the *genius loci*. He helped lay out the garden for them and was full of views about their chimneys—how there was much to be said for a touch of colour in them (the Easedale quarries might supply it) and, as for shape, they had best be half-rounded and half-square. So up they went, a little like a rustic

MARY ARNOLD

version of a steam-boat's funnel—strange monument of Wordsworth's preference in chimneys. There were endless walks together and talks upon Reform, full of the poet's dark forebodings and the Doctor's resolutely hopeful outlook. Once, on the way up Greenhead Ghyll, they had a great set-to, and Great Rigg looked down indulgently at the two small, disputatious mortals. But friendship survived these neighbourly differences; and when the poet went up to Oxford for his honorary degree, the Arnolds travelled across from Rugby to see the ceremony in the Sheldonian. For Fox How, no less than Rugby, was a rare factory of friendships.

But Rugby was her true home, where “father, mother, and fry” (in his cheerful catalogue) filled the Headmaster’s house in term-time, even overflowing into the Doctor’s study, or indulged in sacrilegious games of family cricket, when the school was absent, on the sacred pitch hallowed by the Eleven, or sat

BONNET AND SHAWL

together on still September evenings “under the enormous elms of the School-field, which almost overhang the house, and saw the line of our battlemented roofs and the pinnacles and cross of our Chapel cutting the unclouded sky.” The Rugby sky was still unclouded one summer morning, when the little country doctor questioned him about his sudden pains. Had he ever fainted ? No, he had never fainted. Had a relation ever died of chest ? His father had, and suddenly. The doctor looked a little grave; and Mary was dreadfully anxious. They nursed him for an hour. But it was all over by eight o’clock ; and in the June sunshine the unmelodious rooks were wheeling over the big elms.

Her life was over too, though she lived on. Starting five years before him in the race, she persevered for thirty more. But it was all an epilogue, with Arthur Stanley writing regularly to tell her how Spain was really just like something that the Doctor had written of it in the

MARY ARNOLD

third volume of his Roman history; and how he was not quite sure how far the Doctor would have approved of the Alhambra, as “presenting the image of the last elegances and refinements of a feeble and corrupted civilisation, not of the original vigour of a great and growing nation”; but how Gibraltar would have been certain to earn his approval by its uncompromising aspect no less than by its British qualities; and what Paris looked like during the Revolution of 1848 (which the Doctor would most certainly not have admired); and all about his own triumphant progress, so gratifying to a Headmaster’s wife, from Norwich to Westminster and on to Osborne, where he was positively telling the young Prince of Wales all about the Holy Land. She loved to watch all their careers, to hear how little Clough, who used to get so inky and so ardent with the school magazine, was getting on, or to read Matt’s latest budget with the reviews of *Merope* and what Sainte-Beuve had

BONNET AND SHAWL

said about him and how they ought to plant arbutus at Fox How just on the left of the path outside the drawing-room window, going towards the hand-bridge. She could still make a home at Ambleside, still listen to the Rotha and watch the cloud shadows drift across Fairfield. But there was no one now for her to make it for. That had been her gift above all others—to make a home. Once she had made one for Tom's parlour-boarders at Laleham; then for himself; and, last and greatest home of all, the School House where they had helped to re-make England, under the elms at Rugby.

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

*But I knew'd a Quäker feller as often 'as towd ma this :
" Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny
is ! "*

NORTHERN FARMER—NEW STYLE.

WHISPERING from its towers the last enchantments of Baroque (or is it Chinese Chippendale ?), the career of Benjamin Disraeli stands like a fantastic summer-house in the trim garden of Victorian England, casting the oddest shadows on those neatly gravelled walks. One sees it always as an annexe, as an outbuilding, as something separate from the grave outline of the main edifice and in a widely different style. Sometimes, indeed, it almost seems to be a Folly, one of those oddities of architecture that never find a second tenant but survive, wistful memorials of a vanished eccentricity, appealing faintly by their tortured outline and

BONNET AND SHAWL

their unlikely ornament. No, the best image is a summer-house; for one can mix more styles in summer-houses. So there it stands in the clear light of eighty years ago—the strange career of a young Jew who, articled to a solicitor, wrote novels, yet lived a stranger novel than he ever wrote. For the Byronic youth lived to be a Victorian Prime Minister, and “his Corinthian style” (as he wrote of someone else’s), “in which the Macnad of Mr. Burke was habited in the last mode of Almack’s,” survived to write State papers. Life was indeed a novel—almost a novelette; and he ornamented it at every corner with romance—with chibouques and scimitars, with sombre broodings on the Mount of Olives, with the oddest politics, with dreams of an aristocracy restored and a Church resurgent, with peacocks screaming under his windows on the parterres of Hughenden, with Palmerstonian *coups de théâtre* that sent British battleships to Besika Bay and Sikh infantry to Malta, with

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

a demure flirtation with his unprepossessing Sovereign, with an earldom, with Peace, with Honour, with the crown regilded, with the Garter. It was all a little like some rococo landscape-gardener's pagoda, hung at every corner with bells and Chinese lanterns, but breaking out occasionally in Gothic ornament; Greek pediments appeared in unexpected places, and horseshoe arches hinted at the Alhambra.

But which of all the decorations of his strange career was stranger than his wife who, voluble and odd, caught something of his eccentricity in clothing, and startled his colleagues with her sudden speeches, until the most sedate of them considered having their leader's wife to stay in order to "complete the astonishment of our neighbours"? And yet she mothered him for thirty years, till he could write of her that "there was no care which she could not mitigate and no difficulty which she could not face," and died, a Viscountess of his creation, at eighty. As the

BONNET AND SHAWL

impassive figure by her side progressed indomitably towards the chilly summits of public life, she babbled gaily on. Lady Beaconsfield may surely be counted a bell on that queer pagoda, which its architect had hung with care and mourned when it fell silent. So she smiled up at Dizzy and Dizzy smiled down at her, as they grew old together. But who can tell what she made of it, or he of her?

I

She was not beautiful; but she was bright. Even the dark young gentleman they met at Bulwer's admitted as much. Did he not write off a full account of his encounter with "a pretty little woman, a flirt, and a rattle"? It was surprising that he remembered her at all, because the evening had been crowded. There were so many peers for him to talk to. To say nothing of "L. E. L.," the muse of Brompton (one really met everyone at Bulwer's in 1882).

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

Besides, he had to watch his moment for a word with Tom Moore, who was extremely civil and showed signs of having read his latest novel. So it was wonderful that he remembered. But then he always had a memory for pretty little women to whom he was presented "by particular desire." He made his bow; she shook her ringlets at him and confessed that she "liked silent, melancholy men." He might, by way of repartee, have shaken his. For those were the days when his distinguished pallor was set off by a generous *coiffure* of gleaming curls that almost reached his shoulders, and he was a little apt to startle evening parties with a velvet coat, lace ruffles, and a spirited waistcoat in delicious conflict with a pair of purple trousers striped with gold. She made her arch avowal. But he only answered, in his dreadfully sarcastic manner, that he "had no doubt of it." Her volubility, it seemed, had scarcely ruffled his Byronic gloom. Still, he remembered it.

BONNET AND SHAWL

Her feminine fluency impressed him at their first meeting ; and he was not easily impressed. She was a sailor's daughter, married to a man of means who sat for Maidstone in the House of Commons. He was a strange young man with enigmatic airs, two novels to his credit, and an unholy taste for the society of his betters. He knew all that could be learnt of life in his father's library, a kindergarten and two private schools, a journey up the Rhine, a little unsuccessful speculation, and a Grand Tour in the East. Like his *beau idéal* in fiction, he had seen through everything—" On all subjects his mind seemed to be instructed and his opinions formed. He flung out a result in a few words ; he solved with a phrase some deep problem that men muse over for years." For he was nearly twenty-eight. But she (if biography must be unchivalrous) was forty. Yet her volubility stayed in his memory. When he tried to describe it to his sister, words failed him. Indeed, her power of rapid and continuous

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

speech was very like a force of Nature; for it had something of the flow, all the continuity, and more than all the sparkle of Niagara.

Besides, she had a husband in the House of Commons; and the young writer's fancy was beginning to stray in the direction of politics. True, his political convictions were slightly lacking in precision. Had he not written gaily, "Am I a Whig or a Tory? I forget. As for the Tories, I admire antiquity, particularly a ruin; even the ruins of the Temple of Intolerance have a charm. I think I am a Tory. But then the Whigs give such good dinners, and are the most amusing. I think I am a Whig; but then the Tories are so moral, and morality is my *forte*; I must be a Tory. But the Whigs dress so much better; and an ill-dressed party, like an ill-dressed man, must be wrong. Yes! I am a decided Whig. And yet . . ." there were obvious attractions in the *entrée* to a political house, even though his host was a Tory member and the dinner-parties were sometimes

BONNET AND SHAWL

a little dull. Besides, his lady sparkled endlessly and liked silent, melancholy men. They overlooked the Park, and he was soon lunching there to see a review. He met Joseph Bonaparte as well, and houses where one could encounter ex-Kings of Spain were not to be despised. So his frilled shirts, Byronic collars, and embroidered waistcoats were seen in Mrs. Wyndham Lewis's drawing-room in the gay years when he was poet, novelist, and politician by turns. His epic poem failed; he lost several elections; but he was mounting in the scale. Was he not taken up by Lady Blessington and the incomparable d'Orsay? The dandies liked him; Mrs. Norton took him to the play; even the Tories melted. For Lord Lyndhurst seemed to fancy his politics; the Duke was credibly reported to have called him manly; and he was positively elected to the Carlton. He was a Tory now, though of slightly nebulous principles, wrote slashing articles for them, and was generally expected to come

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

into Parliament. So no one was surprised when the Whips sent him down to fight the second seat at Maidstone.

The sitting member was the husband of his talkative acquaintance, and they drove down together. The crowd before the hustings showed an unpleasant tendency to greet the new candidate with cheerful cries of "Old clo'," as well as with allusions (of an unexpected literary character) to "Shylock." But the combination was successful; a solitary Whig was routed; and young Disraeli drove back to London as an elected member of the first Parliament of Queen Victoria. The Wyndham Lewises had brought him in—for the local prestige of the sitting member had been of inestimable electioneering value to a strange candidate—and Mrs. Lewis would have been less than human if she had not gloried in the achievement. But she was never less than human—sometimes, indeed, a little more; and now she wrote with unaccustomed solemnity to a relation,

BONNET AND SHAWL

Mark what I say—mark what I prophesy : Mr. Disraeli will in a very few years be one of the greatest men of his day. His great talents, backed by his friends Lord Lyndhurst and Lord Chandos, with Wyndham's power to keep him in Parliament, will insure his success. They call him my Parliamentary *protégé*.

For her silent, melancholy man was launched and, better still, was launched under her colours.

There was a pleasant interlude, in which they went to stay with his bookish father “among our beechen groves” at Bradenham, admired the dogs, the folios, the adoring sister, and the younger brothers; and once more a relative of Mrs. Lewis received the news that “Our political pet, the eldest, commonly called Dizzy, you will see a great deal of; you know Wyndham brought him in for Maidstone with himself.” For it was pleasing to make careers for dark young men with melancholy manners, and more pleasing still to learn from them how “dull and *triste*” it was after she

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

left their homes, with dutiful messages that “ all unite here in love and affection and compliments to you and Wyndham ” and the shy addition, “ I send my quota.” She was at Bradenham again a few months later and learned once more on her departure how greatly she was missed and how flat and dull she had left her hosts—“ almost as dull and dispirited as you think me.” But life was a little dull for her that winter. Her husband was not well; and the very day before his youthful colleague made a maiden speech of some celebrity, he died; and Mrs. Lewis was a widow.

II

She was, to be ungallant, a widow of forty-five with a bright eye, a restless tongue, and an abundance of dark curls. At first bereavement overwhelmed her; for the shock had been extremely sudden. Her young friend, assiduous

BONNET AND SHAWL

in consolation, was among the first callers at the darkened house; and he was soon writing to her in a mood of gentle reminiscence about political engagements at "Maidstone—that Maidstone where we have been so happy!" His tone, in her early weeks of widowhood, was grave and friendly. He proffered advice; he multiplied assurances of a warm place for her in the affections of his family circle; he wrote gay chronicles of life in London to solace her exile; he assured her with a new note of devotion that "the severe afflictions which you have undergone, and the excellent, and to me unexpected qualities with which you have met them, the talent, firmness and sweet temper, will always make me your faithful friend," and generally caught the guardian's tone in a manner that was highly creditable to a young gentleman of thirty-three comporting himself as an old family friend. The *rôle* was self-allotted, and young Disraeli became the sympathetic *raisonneur* of Mrs. Wyndham Lewis's

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

comedy. For her silent, melancholy man was growing up.

There was a gradual alteration in the tone of his communications. His letters, which had been subscribed in March, "God bless you, dear friend. D.," progressed in April to "Ever your affectionate friend, D." But before May was out, her youthful correspondent was "Your affectionate D." Slightly cheered by these endearments, her drooping spirits rose so far as to make him a little gift of one of those elaborate (and occasionally disastrous) watch-chains, of which he was particularly fond. His acknowledgment was almost lover-like—"I assure you that with unaffected delight I felt that for the first time in public I wore your *chains*. I hope you are not ashamed of your slave. . . . Farewell ! I am happy if you are." A note of romance seemed to be creeping into the more austere tone of her youthful guardian. June went by, and the young Queen was crowned. But even the joys of pageantry

BONNET AND SHAWL

failed to distract him ; and in July he scrawled a note to her among the glasses on the table of a coaching inn to acquaint her that “ you have not been the whole day a moment absent from my thoughts,” followed a morning later by the more ardent line, “ Let me avail myself of this moment, which I seize in a room full of bustle and chatter, to tell you how much I love you.” For it is plain from all the signs that month that he had offered marriage.

His views on marriage were, perhaps, slightly less romantic than his opinions upon other subjects. It was not many years since he had written to his sister : “ By the bye, would you like Lady Z—— for a sister-in-law, very clever, £25,000 and domestic ? As for ‘ love,’ all my friends who married for love and beauty either beat their wives or live apart from them. This is literally the case. I may commit many follies in life, but I never intend to marry for ‘ love,’ which I am sure is a guarantee of infelicity.” That page from an old letter may

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

be a momentary pose, an airy fling, a young man's facile and all-knowing cynicism, or just a clever aside escaped from an unwritten novel and dashed off to impress a round-eyed sister in the country. But the long record of Disraeli's friendships with women scarcely marks him as one of the world's lovers. For his last novel was a sustained pæan in praise of female friends, regarded solely from the point of view of their utility to rising young men; his first (and by far his strongest) feminine attachment was to his sister; and the ladies whom he distinguished with his friendship were, with one shadowy exception, advanced in years and almost uniformly unattractive. Indeed, the amorous episodes in his novels were of the wildest unreality. For Romance in her most ardent forms seemed somehow to elude the incurable romantic.

Romance and courtesy alike dictated his first attentions to his late colleague's widow. It was delicious to assume protective airs, to wipe

BONNET AND SHAWL

away her tears, to lean in manly attitudes above a drooping figure posed in graceful proximity to an urn. Besides, she was distinctly eligible. His family was always pressing him to marry, to secure his fortunes, to ensure a line of squires for Bradenham ; and what more promising *parti* than a vivacious lady with an income and windows overlooking the Park ? So he abandoned himself to romance. His predecessor died in March ; and in July Disraeli offered marriage. His divinity was pardonably coy. For bereavement was something of a duty in 1838 ; and she required a year in which to wear her weeds and study Mr. Lewis's remarkable successor. His passion rose to heights that autumn. Writing her name " in large characters " on a sheet of paper, he placed it before his desk and, under this inspiration, essayed a tragedy in verse. The inspiration failed. Her name was Mary Anne : the tragedy was far from good. His ecstasies increased, as she prescribed maternally for his passing ail-

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

ments. But though the New Year opened on a lover's frenzy, his pride began to suffer from the long delay. The insistent wooer pleaded; but his goddess was still exasperatingly coy. She played him—sometimes delicately, sometimes with a less felicitous touch. Once her fatal garrulity so far overcame her as to permit an unforgivable allusion to the material advantages of marrying her—she mentioned money. Her lover's pride was touched; he towered into indignation and was desired to leave the house—that eligible house which overlooked the Park. That night he poured out all his bitterness on paper. Money? Yes, he had first thought of her for her money, “influenced by no romantic feelings.” But even her money was a snare—“much less than I, or the world, imagined . . . as far as I was concerned, a fortune which could not benefit me in the slightest degree; it was merely a jointure not greater than your station required; enough to maintain your establishment and gratify

BONNET AND SHAWL

your private tastes.” So he had loved her for herself, only to be rewarded by base suspicions of unworthy motives. Profoundly wounded by the imputation, he renounced her in a tempest of romantic eloquence : “Triumph—I seek not to conceal my state . . . my victim head . . . the scoff and jest of that world, to gain whose admiration has been the effort of my life.” He closed upon a slightly unchivalrous note—“For a few years you may flutter in some frivolous circle. But the time will come . . .” It was exactly what he had said to the House of Commons when it, too, refused to hear him—his invariable threat. Less obdurate, his goddess melted instantly, begged him to come to her, denied her imputations, pleaded the embarrassments of her widowhood which imposed delays upon their happiness—“I am devoted to you.” She was indeed. The idyll was resumed; and when the House rose, they married at St. George’s, Hanover Square, a bride of forty-seven kneeling at that modish

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

altar beside a bridegroom of thirty-four. Yet who could say which of them was the elder?

III

The overture was odd enough; but a still odder piece ensued. For their melody endured more than thirty years, and she lived to see him Prime Minister, he to make her a Viscountess. In a Plutarchian moment she once contrasted them :

Very calm.

* * *

He is a genius.

* * *

His whole soul is
devoted to politics
and ambition.

Very effervescent.

* * *

She is a dunce.

* * *

She has no ambition
and hates politics.

She wronged herself. For the long remnant of her days was devoted to his politics and his ambition, and he remained (as he had been in the beginning) her “political pet.”

They were the oddest couple. The world

BONNET AND SHAWL

observed a husband who distilled his utterance in measured oracles and was gravely attentive to his babbling partner, while she rioted in a glorious excess of speech, which varied from a gay confession that she never knew whether the Greeks came after or before the Romans, or simple *gaffes* in the spirit (though not quite the idiom) of Mrs. Malaprop, or still wilder expositions in a manner all her own of the inferiority of Greek sculpture to her “Dizzy in his bath.” Startling to the ear, she was almost equally bizarre to the eye; for her style of dress appeared to veer uncertainly between the ship in full sail and the Burmese idol. This lively, lovable eccentric informed the world with cheerful candour that “Dizzy married me for my money, but if he had the chance again he would marry me for love.” The world was sceptical. But then the world was unaware of how she mothered him; it never heard who supplied his medicines and cut his hair; it knew nothing of little dinners

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

eaten off two pairs of knees in a waiting brougham between division-bells in Palace Yard; it never stood outside a lighted house that overlooked the Park to watch a carriage drive up after midnight and release a hungry politician to polish off a bottle and a bird under a pair of eyes that had waited up for him. It knew so little of her immense devotion. But her husband knew; and his long memory was capable of inexhaustible gratitude.

At first she came into his world and was initiated bravely into the mysteries of Rothschilds and Montefiores. She met the Bonaparte pretender and scolded him loudly for rowing them on to a Thames mudbank; and when slightly solemn youths began to cultivate her husband, she listened brightly to their endless talk about a new political party (it called itself *Young England*) that was to regenerate Church, throne and people, to say nothing of annoying Sir Robert Peel. They treated her with the grave courtesy reserved for the one married

BONNET AND SHAWL

woman in a circle of undergraduates and sent messages of tremendous chivalry, desiring to be laid “at the little feet of Madame.” She was at Deepdene playing, as someone wrote, Proserpine to her “gloomy Dis.,” when he got the notion of embodying their new ideas in a trilogy of novels. Indeed, he dedicated the second instalment of it “to one whose noble spirit and gentle nature ever prompt her to sympathise with the suffering; to one whose sweet voice has often encouraged, and whose taste and judgment have ever guided, its pages: the most severe of critics, but—a perfect Wife!” But though she was the smiling *vivandière* of Young England, she made no other contribution. It was quite enough for her that Dizzy was to be leader. Those were her politics.

Once, at least, this principle inspired her to a disastrous initiative, when she wrote to Peel, pressing upon that frigid man her Dizzy’s unanswerable claims to office. The charm failed

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

to work. But she was a skilful partner in his electioneering; and respectful tradesmen told their Member that she was “such a gay lady, sir! You can never have a dull moment, sir!” She even managed to maintain a friendship with Mr. Gladstone through the most heated years of his rivalry with her adored champion. Yet her normal *rôle* was more passive. For she gathered his praises to fill budgets for the proud relatives at Bradenham or for the strange old woman at Torquay who took such an interest in him. It was her ear that almost caught the Queen herself saying to someone, “There’s Mr. Disraeli.” When he went up to Oxford to be capped for his honorary degree, her eye smiled down at him from the Sheldonian gallery; and he put in his eye-glass, ranged along the line of watching ladies, found her, and kissed his hand with exquisite *sang-froid*. She was in Paris with him, when they dined with the new Emperor at the Tuileries; and quite unperturbed by gold-braided chamber-

BONNET AND SHAWL

lains and watchful ministers and tall *Cent-gardes* in blue and silver, she told his lovely Empress all about her imperial master's incompetence in rowing-boats. She even followed him to Windsor, whose grim portals were rarely opened to Ministers' wives; and she was positively honoured with a place at the Prince of Wales's wedding named by Majesty herself.

So as her political pet mounted the long ascent, she mounted with him. But her work was done behind the shifting scenes of that astonishing pageant. For she was his unfailing nurse. It was years since she had prescribed the drastic remedies of cayenne and stout for his youthful ailments; but a middle-aged Chancellor of the Exchequer could still attribute his final skirmish in defence of a falling Tory Government "to your getting up so often, and especially to the laudanum, for, though I did not sleep, it soothed my head." He was fifty-four now, and she sixty-seven. But they aged gracefully together; and once,

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

when both of them were ill at the same time, there was a charming fusillade of little notes between the sick-rooms :

You have sent me the most amusing and charming letter I ever had. It beats Horace Walpole and Mme. de Sévigné.

Grosvenor Gate has become a hospital, but a hospital with you is worth a palace with anybody else.

Your own
D.

“ . . . but if he had the chance again he would marry me for love.” Perhaps.

A few years more, and she could share his triumph. For Dizzy was Prime Minister of England, and one gusty night in 1867 she stood by his side in Downing Street receiving everybody, from the Princess of Wales to Mr. Gladstone, at the great party in the new Foreign Office. There was a dreadful storm that evening, and she was very far from well. But Dizzy was Prime Minister, and she was seventy-six and happy. She had quite caught his tone now. When she thanked the Queen

BONNET AND SHAWL

for flowers, she intimated, in the rich Disraelian manner, that “ their lustre and perfume were enhanced by the condescending hand which had showered upon him all the treasures of spring.” And when she redecorated the house at Hughenden, it was her taste that Gothicised that unpretending mansion into a rococo casket worthy to enclose the great romantic.

But the years were growing shorter. Soon she was nearly eighty, and even her political pet was sixty-seven. She could still lend French novels to young guests (the guest was Harcourt, but the novel remains nameless); Disraeli’s lunch-basket, when he set out for Balmoral, was still provided with “ a partridge breakfast, and a chicken-and-tongue dinner; and plenty of good wine,” eliciting affectionate thanks “ with a thousand embraces, my dearest, dearest wife.” But “ Miladi ” failed a little, and her husband walked beside her carriage on the walks of Hughenden: those walks which she had planned.

MARY ANNE DISRAELI

Illness kept her in town one summer, and they drove for miles together, exploring London and its startling environs with a map. Then she saw the trees of Hughenden again, and Disraeli reported a successful "hegira from Grosvenor Gate." But she failed once more; and he was left to stare with a tormented face at the dreadful prospect, "*if anything happens, I am totally unable to meet the catastrophe.*" It came, though. But her long devotion was not ended. He found a tender line from her— ". . . and now farewell, my dear Dizzy. Do not live alone, dearest. Someone I earnestly hope you may find as attached to you as your own devoted MARY ANNE." For he was still, was always her political pet.

EMILY TENNYSON

EMILY TENNYSON

*Man for the field and woman for the hearth :
Man for the sword and for the needle she :
Man with the head and woman with the heart :
Man to command and woman to obey :
All else confusion.*

THE PRINCESS.

A MODERN ironist has drawn her. Trotting in one morning to the study at Farringford, she found clever Mr. Woolner, all in overalls and bearded to the lips, busy modelling her poet's head—the austere head of 1857, with shaven chin and just the very slightest hint of Medusa in its tangled curls. Not that his Muse was unusually stern that year. Had he not obliged, at Her Majesty's request, with two extra verses for *God save the Queen* on the occasion of the Princess Royal's wedding to the Crown Prince of Prussia—

God bless our Prince and Bride !
God keep their lands allied,
God save the Queen !

BONNET AND SHAWL

Clothe them with righteousness,
Crown them with happiness,
Them with all blessings bless,
God save the Queen.

—a sufficiently blameless outpouring for any Poet Laureate? Perhaps her birthday present had been a shade severe—the first two lines of a new *Idyll* upon Guinevere :

But hither shall I never come again,
Never lie by thy side ; see thee no more :
Farewell !

Husbands, one feels, have given wives more tactful presents. But Emily could understand : she knew her poet. So when she found them in the study, Mr. Woolner modelling hard and Alfred with a poet's neckcloth open wide for a liberal display of a poet's neck, she hazarded a mild enquiry. For if Mr. Max Beerbohm's kindly invention is to be believed (and his fancies often tell more truth than other people's facts), she said : " You know, Mr. Woolner, I'm one of the most unmeddlesome of women ; but—when (I'm only asking), *when* do you

EMILY TENNYSON

begin modelling his halo?" The *rôle* was not exacting. But in that little scene she played it to perfection.

There may be further confirmation. For her poet in old age wrote, though the world rarely reads it, his autobiography. A model to biographers, it fills less than two pages, from the slightly self-conscious announcement of its exordium that

*I am Merlin,
And I am dying,
I am Merlin
Who follow The Gleam*

to its closing exhortation to a "young Mariner" to do likewise. This dactylic summary of his career, with the procession of his favourite subjects, of

warble of water,
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,

succccded by

Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,

BONNET AND SHAWL

and the ultimate splendours, only a little dimmed by Victorian (or rather, Albertine) allegory,

Of Arthur the blameless,

waning until Arthur faded into the haze with the spires of Camelot, and

to the land's
Last limit I came—

here is an admirable *Selbst-porträt*, worthy to hang in any literary Uffizi. But a biographer of Emily may be excused for recording with a faint reproach that Merlin, through whose lips her poet chose to speak, was unmarried.

He seemed quite early in life to cast himself for the Bard's part. And how magnificently he played it to the very end—the cloak, the wideawake, the deep, growling speeches, all the glorious apparatus of the Muses that brought Helicon to the Isle of Wight. Sir Henry Irving could not have done it better at the Lyceum. Small wonder that inadequate, clean-shaven moderns scarcely hide their envy,

EMILY TENNYSON

that Mr. H. G. Wells points the derisive finger of *Boon* at “Lord Tennyson at the crest of the Victorian Greatness wave. His hair. His cloak. His noble bearing. His aloofness. His Great Pipe. His price per word. His intellectual familiarities with Queen Victoria. . . .” For he had them all. When Alfred struck the lyre, his countrymen (often a little hard of hearing) put down their ledgers and listened. Was he not quite recognisably a poet? Such aids to identification are not to be despised: one can think of moderns who might profit from being marked in equally plain figures. Perhaps the critics recognise them; their work may pass for poetry with the elect by reason of its typographical disposition on the page; but for most of us their meagre exterior leaves the question sadly in doubt—perhaps they are not poets after all. Lord Tennyson presented no such problem to his contemporaries. Anyone could see that he was a poet, his life one long Eisteddfod, with himself druidically posed and

BONNET AND SHAWL

perpetually crowned Bard. Or else he was a *Skald*. For what *Skald* secured a better hearing through the smoke of a Norse banquet? Yes, it was sometimes as a *Skald*, one feels, that he saw himself, pouring his melodies upon the subjects of Queen Victoria—"Saxon," as he himself observed, "and Norman and Dane"—where they sat carelessly above their wine, conveniently served in the skulls of their enemies.

It was the Bard's part; and he played it in the great tradition. But, with a sudden memory of Emily, one wonders rather ruefully what part tradition supplies for the Bard's wife.

I

Her entry, though, was quite traditional. She entered down a woodland path, dressed modestly in grey. The season was—how could it fail to be?—the springtime; nor was the place unworthy of the occasion, since it was

EMILY TENNYSON

called Holy Well Wood—sometimes, indeed (with a still stronger sense of fitness), the Fairy Wood in Holywell. Its snowdrops were renowned . . . but why paint the lily? He came upon her at a bend of the path. She leaned, a walking quotation, upon a manly arm; for the arm was Arthur Hallam's, half-way to *In Memoriam* already. The maid was seventeen, the poet twenty; and he inquired, with a command of classical mythology that was creditable even to a Cambridge undergraduate in his third year, “Are you a Dryad or an Oread wandering here?” But such questions are easier to ask than to answer; and there is no record of her reply.

That was her entry. The next scene is still more Tennysonian. A younger sister of the nymph married the poet's brother. Now she was twenty-four, he twenty-seven; and they walked up the aisle together behind the happy pair. Better still, the bridegroom was a young clergyman. The village church, the smiling

BONNET AND SHAWL

pews, the bridesmaid—who could resist the implications? At any rate, he did not.

O bridesmaid, ere the happy knot was tied,
Thine eyes so wept that they could hardly see;
Thy sister smiled and said, “No tears for me!
A happy bridesmaid makes a happy bride.”
And then, the couple standing side by side,
Love lighted down between them full of glee,
And over his left shoulder laugh’d at thee,
“O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride.”
And all at once a pleasant truth I learn’d,
For while the tender service made thee weep,
I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not hide,
And prest thy hand, and knew the press return’d,
And thought, “My life is sick of single sleep:
O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride!”

There had been other meetings—one, a year or two before, when she wore a silk pelisse and they sat together on an iron garden-chair and read from the same book. But the hand-clasp at Louisa’s wedding was decisive, and they became engaged.

Their felicity, alas! was sadly delayed. For three years they corresponded with immense energy. A pious bonfire has consumed his letters, and the poet’s “silly sooth” of love has

EMILY TENNYSON

perished in its kindly smoke. For he had little sympathy with the public appetite for private things that gnawed even Victorian bosoms.
Craving for

A life that moves to gracious ends,
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,

he echoed with slightly terrifying emphasis the Shakespearean “Cursed be he that moves my bones.” He deplored

the irreverent doom
Of those that wear the Poet's crown :
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry :

“ Proclaim the faults he would not show :
Break lock and seal : betray the trust :
Keep nothing sacred : 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should know.”

He spoke with the indignant (yet not ungratified) certainty of being one

For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd !

BONNET AND SHAWL

Biography accepts the rebuke. Indeed, it rather needs it; and guiltier heads than mine may hang a little before resuming their titters at a more convenient opportunity. But, without being a carrion vulture, one may regret the loss of all the love-passages in his letters to Emily Sellwood. For others besides the meaner birds of prey might have enjoyed the spectacle of Tennyson in love.

The graver passages alone survive, in which he regaled her with metaphysics, notes on chance encounters, Welsh topography, and early railway-carriages “entirely open, without seats, nothing but a rail or two running across it, something like pens of cattle . . . liker flying than anything else.” One day in 1840 he wrote a crowded letter, full of his memories of Warwick Castle and the little room at Stratford, already generously scrawled with visitors’ names, where Alfred caught the prevailing habit—“I was seized with a sort of enthusiasm, and wrote mine, tho’ I was a little

EMILY TENNYSON

ashamed of it afterwards"—not, it seems, of the vandalism, but of the gesture. For his apology continues : ". . . yet the feeling was genuine at the time, and I did homage with the rest." Then, having duly

waited for the train at Coventry
and

hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
he wrote to her from London, enclosing "a virgin-ballad never yet written down . . . simple enough at any rate." It was the slightly anaemic tale of "Sweet Emma Moreland" and her highly unsatisfactory interview with Edward Gray, who had already written on another's tomb the discouraging couplet,

Here lies the body of Ellen Adair.
And here the heart of Edward Gray !

That had been a tragedy of misunderstanding. Alfred's was simpler. For though Emily and he understood perfectly—had, indeed, understood ever since that hallowed day in church at

BONNET AND SHAWL

Charles' and Louisa's wedding—a poet's livelihood was tragically small. For even poets have to pay their tradesmen, especially married poets; and in spite of every effort of the sacred Nine he could not provide for a wife. No fairy godmother appeared; stern parents intervened; and since the young man had no prospects, the correspondence was forbidden.

The prohibition was accepted; and for ten years they never met. He was growing now. For he was launched on London, where Carlyle and the strapping young "life-guardsman spoilt by making poetry" smoked one another into silence across the hearth in Chelsea. Dickens sent books to him "as a man whose writings enlist my whole heart and nature in admiration of their Truth and Beauty," and he walked through the rain in Pall Mall with his arm linked in Samuel Rogers'. His Muse was growing too. Had she not achieved the prophetic quickstep of *Locksley Hall*, the grave perfection of

EMILY TENNYSON

Break, break break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !

to say nothing of *Morte d'Arthur*, with its mounting eloquence, hints of mysterious power,

And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

There was a glimmer of a fairy godmother as well. For Carlyle had overborne a hesitating politician with his “Richard Milnes, when are you going to get that pension for Alfred Tennyson ? ” and his still more unanswerable, “Richard Milnes, on the Day of Judgment, when the Lord asks you why you didn’t get that pension for Alfred Tennyson, it will not do to lay the blame on your constituents ; it is *you* that will be damned.” Faced with a prospect of eternal torment, Milnes dropped a word to the Prime Minister. The reading of Prime Ministers does not normally include contemporary verse ; and Sir Robert Peel was quite innocent of information as to the object of his

BONNET AND SHAWL

contemplated benefaction. Besides, his head was full of foreign wheat and sliding-scales that autumn. For it was the sodden autumn of 1845, when potatoes rotted in the ground and one unrelenting downpour rained away the Corn Laws. But he found time for a glance at *Ulysses*, sentenced (like himself) to

mete and dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

The royal pleasure was duly taken; and Richard Milnes escaped (it may be presumed) damnation by a princely grant entitling Tennyson to a stipend of four pounds a week.

His prospects brightened; and almost hopefully he reopened the forbidden correspondence with Emily Sellwood. They had once discussed a poem to be written upon the higher education of women; and now, with *The Princess* in preparation, he consulted her upon a lyric. Her choice (and who can question it?) was for

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea.

EMILY TENNYSON

The book appeared. But there was more in prospect. For he had “a long, butcher-ledger-like book,” filled with elegies on Arthur Hallam. They were to be assembled under the title *In Memoriam*; and a publisher had positively promised to pay a yearly royalty on that and his other poems. So the tradesmen had less to fear now. He met Emily again; and, eager swain of forty, renewed his vows with a maid of thirty-seven. They wedded promptly—so promptly, indeed, that the cake and wedding-dresses came too late; though Alfred called it “the nicest wedding” that he had ever attended—and so it was. In later years he added, with grave piety, that the peace of God came into his life before the altar. The church was by the Thames at Shiplake; and when the couple drove away, owing a large part of the marriage fees (including “the clerk and shirts”), the accomplished bridegroom made a skittish ode to the Vicar in their wedding carriage, as it bowled through the

BONNET AND SHAWL

June afternoon along the road to Pangbourne :

Vicar of this pleasant spot
Where it was my chance to marry,
Happy, happy be your lot
In the Vicarage by the quarry.
You were he that knit the knot !

For at last, after twenty years of acquaintance and thirteen of courting, Alfred had made the happy bridesmaid of 1837 his happy bride of 1850.

II

He loved her ; though his affection might sometimes be mistaken for self-love. For he tended, in his own fashion, to make the object of his love a part of himself. Years afterwards he made a poem for her, by which their love is often remembered :

Dear, near and true—no truer Time himself
Can prove you, tho' he make you evermore
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life
Shoots to the fall—take this and pray that he
Who wrote it, honouring your sweet faith in him . . .

EMILY TENNYSON

The remaining eight of its thirteen lines related to himself. Devotion was its theme. But it was rather hers to him than his to her; and it never failed him. Poets are apt to be absorbing creatures; and Emily was happy enough to be absorbed. Not that he failed her. For his allegiance was still unshaken forty years away, and the grandchildren of his first readers found him dedicating the last volume of an octogenarian Poet Laureate

to you,
This and my love together,
To you that are seventy-seven,
With a faith as clear as the heights of the June-blue
heaven,
As the green of the bracken amid the gloom of the
heather.

Their honeymoon was sacramental—first to themselves, next to his Muse. For their footsteps turned at once to Hallam's grave, where the first meeting of the three in Holy Well Wood was sadly re-enacted. Then, after an interlude at Lynton, their route became

BONNET AND SHAWL

Arthurian, taking them to Glastonbury in

the island-valley of Avilion ;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly ;

and finally, in a small house at Coniston, almost Wordsworthian. That year he turned Wordsworthian himself. For Wordsworth died, and Alfred succeeded him as Poet Laureate in the cheerful expectation, as he explained, that the office would always entitle him to be offered the liver-wing at dinner-parties.

So Emily assumed her duties as a Laureate's wife. They corrected proofs together (he was always "proud of her intellect" and valued her judgment highly), started housekeeping, and fled from the wild discomfort of their first home. Their flight into comfort, indeed, was almost Biblical, with Emily sedately drawn by Alfred in a bath-chair all the way to Cuckfield. Then they ransacked London for a Court suit for him to wear at his first Levée ; and Alfred

EMILY TENNYSON

asked Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary, how to behave at Court and received the most indecorous advice. For a year or so they wandered in pursuit of homes. Twickenham received them; but the poet found its air heavy with cabbages in suburban market-gardens. Besides, the floods were apt to exceed even Alfred's well-known love of water. A bold experiment suggested Farnham (she always liked the sand and heather), and readers might have had such glimpses of the Surrey bracken from the hillsides of Hindhead. But, secure behind its Solent, the Isle of Wight was waiting. They rowed across one autumn evening. The big downs and the sweeping coastline were irresistible. A low house beckoned graciously among its trees; and Farringford was theirs.

Glimpses of Emily survive from the first years of marriage—coaxing the maids with little comforts; sitting in the small Twickenham garden to hear Layard's *Nineveh* and

BONNET AND SHAWL

Herschel's *Astronomy* read aloud; or easing a nervous guest, mildly disconcerted by Alfred's ferocious greeting—"So you have found me out"—with her gentler "You need not take Ally literally: he is glad to see you; but we came here to escape from the too-frequent interruptions of London." For old bachelors are often sadly deficient in urbanity; and when Alfred married, he was almost an old bachelor. Besides, a lifetime of male colloquies over blackened clay-pipes had not improved his manners. So his asperity must often have been tempered by a wifely murmur from the far end of the table.

She always looked a little frail; but she could laugh, and made a charming hostess, full of small attentions. Even the scornful house-maid, who dismissed her lord as "only a public writer," said of her mistress: "Oh, she is an angel." That was the general verdict. Her poet spoke of her "tender, spiritual nature"; and someone else recorded her as

EMILY TENNYSON

Perfect woman, perfect wife,
Tender spiritual face.

Indeed she often wore an ethereal expression. Mr. Watts did his best to render it; and she turned it once full on Professor Tyndall, when he seemed to dwell somewhat unduly on the material side of things. Deeply religious, she once nerved herself to tell her husband that “When I pray, I see the face of God smiling upon me.” Small wonder that one evening, after she had gone up to bed, he murmured, “It is a tender, spiritual face,” to a friend, who remembered the words and wrote them in his poem. For her looks matched her spirit; and Alfred could say of her, with slightly wondering solemnity, that she was “higher than I am.”

Even Dr. Jowett, that slightly terrifying compendium of learned doubt, was quite subdued. Himself a connoisseur of greatness, he trained the Balliol youth for eminence and was the invariable friend of the Victorian

BONNET AND SHAWL

great. And even he could grant that Emily was as great as Alfred. For saintliness on such a scale was notable, even in an age of formal goodness. Besides, there was something almost as great in her complete surrender, of which one seems to see a parable in the recorded spectacle of Alfred mesmerising her (with perfect results) after their second boy was born. The Portsmouth guns, in practice for Crimean exploits, boomed with maddening iteration; and Emily was sleeping badly. So Alfred, in Merlin's character at last, plied her with magic passes; and she slept, dutiful as ever.

Not that she was a wholly passive figure. It might simplify the portrait to see her always (as once she was) a faint smile in a Bath chair, wheeled out to see her daffodils. But she was more than Alfred's domestic audience. Her judgment weighed with him in literary matters; and as his method in composition generally took the form of frequent recitation of the

EMILY TENNYSON

growing poem, her attentive ear and eager comment made her almost a collaborator. Besides, she had her own accomplishments. For she set his songs to music. Did she not find a rousing air appropriate to *Britons, guard your own?* And when the news from Russia inspired her husband, stifling ancient resentments, to exclaim

Frenchman, a hand in thine !
Our flags have waved together !
Let us drink to the health of thine and mine
At the battle of Alma River,

she positively wrote two stanzas more, as well as all the music. His rousing call for Volunteers ("Form, Form, Riflemen, Form !") inspired her to a strain which Alfred even found "far more to the purpose than most of Master Balfe's." Years afterwards *Hands all round* was carefully revised for the Queen's birthday; some verses were omitted as inappropriate to this Imperial occasion—one in particular addressed beyond her borders :

BONNET AND SHAWL

Gigantic daughter of the West,
We drink to thee across the flood,
We know thee most, we love thee best
For art thou not of British blood ?
Should war's mad blast again be blown,
Permit not thou the tyrant powers
To fight thy mother here alone,
But let thy broadsides roar with ours.

(The prophecy, though too extravagant for 1882, was realised in 1917.) But when the Empire sang its loyal chorus, it roared to Emily's setting,

To this great cause of Freedom, drink, my friends.
And the great name of England, round and round.

She had graver duties, too. For Farringford was not too far from Osborne ; and when Prince Albert drove over for a sudden visit (and found Alfred's books all over the drawing-room floor), Emily performed a startled curtsey, not less dismayed than the astounded parlourmaid, whom an equerry propelled before them by the shoulders to announce the august visitor to his loyal bard ; while Royal Highness graciously admired the view and undertook to

EMILY TENNYSON

offer a nosegay of Emily's cowslips to Majesty herself. She saw the Queen as well, in the first years of royal widowhood, when they all drove over to Osborne. There was a fine diversity in the Laureate's callers. One afternoon Garibaldi came to see them and planted a Wellingtonia in the garden; it all passed off extremely well, with exchanges of Italian poetry and praises of British vegetation, though when the Liberator had gone, Alfred said a little tartly that he seemed endowed with "the divine stupidity of a hero." Queen Emma of the Sandwich Islands was a more alarming visitor. They made a throne for her out of home-grown wood; and Emily collected money for a cathedral that was sadly needed in Honolulu, whilst Alfred listened to Hawaiian music and gave his guest two big magnolia flowers in his best Hawaiian manner. They had American visitors as well; there was Mr. Bayard Taylor, and the more majestic Mr. Sumner, and the American publisher

BONNET AND SHAWL

whom Alfred scared by dropping on his knees in a moonlit field and saying, “ Violets, man, violets ! smell them and you’ll sleep the better,” and Miss Lowell, who had never seen cowslips until she reached the Isle of Wight, to say nothing of the six Americans who walked up the drive one day, when they were entertaining a brace of Bishops. Such are the social ardours of a Laureate’s wife.

Then there was all her correspondence—letters to be written to all Alfred’s friends, as well as to her own ; notes to Dr. Jowett enclosing letters from the children and asking for suggestions of classical subjects for her husband’s Muse ; letters to unknown persons who desired Alfred’s advice upon religious matters, as well as to the vocal multitudes of perfect strangers, who persisted in pelting him with the most unreadable of home-made poems ; and strange, excited letters from Mr. Fitzgerald, all crying out for answers. But the devoted secretary did not always find her poet

EMILY TENNYSON

a docile master; witness his narrative dispatched to Browning after the publication of *Harold*:

After-dinner talk between husband and wife.

- W. Why don't you write and thank Mr. Browning for his letter?
- H. Why should I? I sent him my book and he acknowledged it.
- W. But such a great and generous acknowledgment.
- H. That's true.
- W. Then you should write: he has given you your crown of violets.
- H. He is the greatest-brained poet in England. Violets fade, he has given me a crown of gold.
- W. Well, I meant the Troubadour crown of golden violets; pray write; you know I would if I could; but I am lying here helpless and horizontal and can neither write nor read.
- H. Then I'll go up and smoke my pipe and write to him.
- W. You'll go up and concoct an imaginary letter over your pipe which you'll never send.
- H. Yes, I will. I'll report our talk.

So her work went on, as long as she had

BONNET AND SHAWL

strength to do it. But her strength failed before his. There was a long phase of mild decline; and their later visitors found her “a dear old lady, a great invalid, as sweet and pathetic as a picture”—and more Tennysonian than ever.

Her work was mainly Alfred—Alfred’s new poems to be planned (“I doubt whether the ‘San Graal’ would have been written but for my endeavour, the Queen’s wish, and that of the Crown Princess”); and *The Last Tournament*, “the plan of which he had been for some weeks discussing with me. Very grand and terrible”); little books to be made up and bound in red or blue paper for him to write in; poems to be copied out and sent to press; books to be cut for him to read. And then there was her Journal to be kept, with all their doings and the very best of Alfred’s sayings. He had asked her to compile their annals, and she was faithful at the task. So she recorded visitors, and poems thought of, and poems completed, and how the wind at Waterloo

EMILY TENNYSON

reminded him of all the dead lamenting, and what he said about the woodpeckers in the New Forest. Nothing escaped her. His lightest similes were caught and recorded by this gentle Boswell—A. in Westminster Abbey saying “How dreamlike it looks”; A. quoting Wordsworth on the Simplon; A.’s dinner-table triumphs; A. confuting Mr. Darwin with his heroic assertion that “your theory of Evolution does not make against Christianity,” and Mr. Darwin answering meekly, “No, certainly not”; and A. making gracious awards of prizes to the scenery of Europe—“The Val d’Anzasca is, he thinks, *the grandest valley that he has seen in the Alps*,” or “‘The Pyrenees,’ he said, ‘look much more Homeric than the Alps.’” She watched A. in every mood and at every moment, earning the right to her last happy murmur: “I have tried to be a good wife.” So perhaps there was a part for the Bard’s wife after all.

EMILY PALMERSTON

EMILY PALMERSTON

“And is that Lady Montfort? Do you know, I never saw her before.”

“Yes, that is the famous Berengaria, the Queen of Society, and the genius of Whiggism.”—ENDYMION.

PERHAPS the species is extinct. Perhaps it never was a species, but some delicious accident of time and manners and a lady that produced in all her brightness the fabled figure of the Political Hostess. And since that legendary dawn, which faded long ago, how many more have strained towards it? Anxious queens of large, unmanageable parties; dowagers inclined to cross-examine guests on distant sofas; young political wives entertaining young political friends with a consequential air and a slight tendency to contradict—each fancies that the goal is reached and stands, fondly superb, the Political Hostess of her

BONNET AND SHAWL

dreams. The novelists, of course, have been very largely to blame—Disraeli first, and later Mrs. Humphry Ward, waving their eager readers on to the bright peaks of social Matterhorns. For what more tempting than to yoke one's hero with an incomparable mate, who should preside with matchless dignity in vast assemblies, or sail through the bright saloons dispensing nods, where nods were needed, and smiles, where a smile might smooth away a crisis? This nonpareil, I sometimes fancy, is as legendary as the phœnix. Fiction has made such use of her that fiction must have been her parent. And yet there is a case or two. Once in a century, perhaps, chance will produce a woman to play a woman's part in politics. In other centuries, though; not, I suspect, in ours. For politics are still a male arena, and in male assemblies our women are apt to grow a little hoydenish. Besides, they nearly all aspire to play men's parts. For are not most of them that dreary

EMILY PALMERSTON

nondescript known to variety programmes as “male impersonators”? Such Violas in breeches can never hope to pass for Political Hostesses: that was a woman’s *rôle*. But in a milder age it was just possible; and once (or twice, at the very most) the world beheld her, rarest of all—still rarer than her legendary mate, the statesman.

France preferred a *salon*, where some solitary figure of light inspired a circle and respectful hearers clustered round an arm-chair or a sofa that dispensed news, epigrams, and entertainment. But in England, homeland of matrimony, the great hostess must be a wife or nothing. No hostess counts without a host. She cannot entertain without one. He may not be conspicuously entertaining, but he must be there: arriving guests expect two smiles as they come up the stairs, two bows to send them down. A lonely hostess at a political party would be an unpardonable solecism. But so, beyond a doubt, would a solitary host. Thus

BONNET AND SHAWL

the perfect consort is manifestly indispensable to every public man : the party Whips ought to supply them. Yet how many statesmen married hostesses ? Motives of chivalry (and caution) exclude the present from the scope of my enquiry. But even the past is not more crowded. For I can think of only one. How notable she was, though—the very greatest hostess of her age and married to its most English statesman.

I

One saw her best, I fancy, at Cambridge House on party nights, with the big rooms all lighted and the stupendous London footmen, whom Mr. Thackeray loved, bawling the names of the whole kingdom and half the Continent. Even the Holy Father had been seen there, when he was only a Cardinal. For as enlightened foreigners a hundred years before had hurried to see Stowe, Blenheim Palace, the

EMILY PALMERSTON

Tower of London, and Mr. Pitt sipping his water in awful majesty at Bath, they hurried now straight from Dover to the Thames Tunnel, the Crystal Palace, and on to one of Lady Palmerston's parties.

They were almost legendary affairs, with all the world in its best clothes and Palmerston's blue ribbon and Emily, "her head held high," as someone saw her, "always very smart and sparkling, and looking so well in her diamonds." (A malicious essayist insinuated that "one knows there is a real crisis when Lady Palmerston forgets her rouge, and Palmerston omits to dye his whiskers.") The company was magnificently mixed. An ambassador or two looked in for a word with the Prime Minister; Whig colleagues aired themselves, released from the Treasury Bench for an hour or so; young Members angled for a smile and felt like rising men; even Radicals expanded in the unaccustomed glow of social eminence. There were Tories too; for Cambridge House

BONNET AND SHAWL

was catholic in its attentions, and the Opposition was received as well. So Mr. Disraeli made his bow and dropped his phrases. But her net was cast more widely still. Men of letters, lured from their dark retreats, blinked in the candlelight; scientists looked unnaturally wise; and editors—Lord Palmerston had a particular fancy for editors—raised gratified countenances, with a watchful eye to see if other editors had been invited. The buzz was general, as Palmerston's big laugh moved through the rooms. Then guests began to slip away, as footmen bawled for carriages downstairs in Piccadilly and the rooms emptied slowly. The company went home to write it all down in its diary—how the Prime Minister had been most affable and in the best of health, though the Austrian ambassador looked rather grave and Mr. Cobden distinctly out of place; how sulky Mr. Greville seemed, and what Mr. Disraeli had been overheard to murmur among the ices. But the big rooms were empty now;

EMILY PALMERSTON

and Palmerston, alone with Emily, was saying with his charming smile, “ Well, my love, how well you have managed it to-night.” And Emily (a young relation heard them) would reply, “ Yes, really, we never had a nicer party; you seemed to please everybody.” That was the end of an evening at Cambridge House. Then they went up to bed; footmen came in and snuffed the candles; and the stiff Empire chairs were left to stare at one another in the big, silent rooms.

Or if one was very lucky, one might have a glimpse of her *en petit comité* at Broadlands. The great country house in Hampshire, with its tall portico that looked across a dreaming river, was full of her; and she, as usual, was full of Palmerston—how he could put things right, if only they would let him; what rascals all the Tories were; and how extremely trying his colleagues began to find John Russell. Even Mr. Greville was less sceptical than usual; when he came down for Christmas and listened

BONNET AND SHAWL

to her eager talk, although her party loyalty sometimes jarred on him a little; for she was the very best of Palmerstonians. Her lord was mostly invisible among his papers, standing all day to write in his incomparable hand on a tall desk behind a parapet of red boxes. He might look in on them at lunch to take his orange, or join the guns for an afternoon among the coverts, if all the Foreign Office drafts had been disposed of. But Emily was always on guard, full of his grievances, denouncing enemies, and keeping a watchful eye for unexpected friends—"Cavour, is that his name? —the Man we were to meet at Hatherton's . . . would it not be right to ask them to dinner Saturday, and any other few I can think of? " That was her life; and as Lord Palmerston confounded his (and England's) enemies, gaily proceeding from strength to strength, the deep voice beside him exclaimed perpetually, "Stay! we will have a party." They invariably did. She wrote the cards for them herself,

EMILY PALMERSTON

whilst her two girls addressed the envelopes ; and for a quarter of the Nineteenth Century Lady Palmerston's parties helped to govern England.

II

She climbed to this agreeable eminence by degrees. She was, by birth, a Lamb ; and Lambs resided with becoming dignity at Brocket. The founder of the house, a country lawyer with a gift for managing estates, had built the mansion in the very latest mode of Georgian elegance and died a baronet. His heir, Sir Peniston, sat in the House of Commons, where he voted faithfully for Lord North and was rewarded by his leader with a bright drop from the fountain of honour. For under that refreshing dew, which played rewardingly over the parched surface of the King's Friends, he blossomed into an Irish peerage ; and the world learned to know him as Lord Melbourne.

BONNET AND SHAWL

The house was full of children—some young brothers, one of whom was a sleepy boy named William, a romping girl, and Emily, “a little thing all eyes.” Her ladyship was painted by Sir Joshua; so were the boys; and Mrs. Damer, indomitable servant of the Muses, modelled the heir as one of the more elegant Roman deities. So the bright sands ran out, as Gainsborough painted duchesses and Mr. Walpole wrote his letters. But as the Eighteenth Century expired, the world was plunged in unaccountable disorder. For France had lurched ungracefully into a wild career of revolution, and Europe was at war. But whilst invasion threatened and the bare hills above Boulogne were white with the French tents, the Lambs pursued their upward way. That summer, as Villeneuve broke the blockade and ran for the West Indies with Nelson in pursuit, William was decorously married into the Whig ~~cousinhood~~ (did he not say once that the Whigs were all cousins?); and on the very day that

EMILY PALMERSTON

Buonaparte learned with a mounting hope from a bundle of English newspapers that his escaping fleet had turned at last towards the Channel, little Emily stood in the big Whitehall drawing-room beside the slightly solemn Cowper and listened to her own marriage-service.

Her bridegroom was a Whig as well, although she might have overlooked the fact in favour of others that were far more exciting. For he was extremely handsome and an earl, yet not too proud (although a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire) to acknowledge a distant connection with the poet Cowper. Besides, he had a splendid house at Panshanger, not far from Brocket; and the proximity to home was distinctly reassuring. So Emily was Lady Cowper, a bright-eyed countess in the delicious mode of 1805 (as Lawrence painted her), with straying curls and a small head that turned to look over a most inviting shoulder. Her earl was charming, and for some years she scarcely noticed that his paces were a trifle slow. For

BONNET AND SHAWL

he was not exactly dull; “I never saw a man,” as someone wrote, “less dull in my life, but he has a slow pronunciation, slow gait and pace.” Sedateness, however creditable to a fifth earl and a poet’s noble kinsman, is a little apt to pall. It may outweigh more solid qualities; even a profile may be less admired if its utterance is unduly measured, a perfect figure seems less perfect if it moves too slowly; and husbands who run to such deliberation have themselves to thank if spirited young wives occasionally seek other entertainment. Emily was still, was always young: and perhaps her handsome earl began to pall a little. There was London, though, to cheer her with an infinity of parties and the long line of chariots in King Street, St. James’s, that stood outside the mystic door of Almack’s, where Mr. Willis scanned his nightly throng and Lady Patronesses, sterner than Cerberus, waved off the uninitiated. There was more, perhaps, than Almack’s; for a husband’s sober paces might

EMILY PALMERSTON

be pleasantly relieved by a gay young bachelor—and Lord Palmerston was gay, was young, was really most attentive.

The tall young man, whose lips were always smiling in a perpetual consciousness of exercise and health, was in strong—perhaps in welcome—contrast with the handsome gravity of her husband. He never moved too slowly or said too little. He danced; he rode to hounds; he drew a Cupid in her album (they called him “Cupid,” too); he even dropped into slightly sententious verse. At intervals he administered the army. For he was Secretary at War, generally accounted “painsstaking and gentlemanlike to the highest degree.” But, assiduous at the War Office, he was no less assiduous in George Street, Hanover Square. The world, indeed, thought of him only as “a handy clever man who moved his estimates very well, appeared to care but little for public affairs in general, went a good deal into society”; and perhaps the world was right.

BONNET AND SHAWL

Cowper, as husbands will, began to ail. They travelled for his health; and German spas are the least enlivening of places. Even home was scarcely more entertaining, since her consort seemed to specialise in Whig grandes. Em did her best—"I do all I can to like that great Peer who is so much Ld. C.'s admiration, but I cannot. . . . However I am *trop bonne femme* to show this or to say a word against him to Ld. C., I must do myself the justice to say that I never in my life set him against any of his friends, but always tried to increase his likings." Worse still, he derived a gloomy satisfaction from watching her in the big rooms at Panshanger "writing out the Chancellor Cowper's diary and illustrating it with all the Portraits of remarkable persons of his time whom he mentions—it will make a very handsome and interesting book—and what is better, it gives Ld. C. very great pleasure to see it 'going on.'" For the tone of her references to him was growing ominously dutiful; and when

EMILY PALMERSTON

duty occupies the home, pleasure is apt to lie outside it.

Pleasure, indeed, which took the smiling form of Palmerston, was often found at Almack's, where the sharp Russian eyes of her friend, the Lieven, saw them together. She quite confessed her interest in him and wrote off to tell her brother how glad she was "to find Lord Palmerston has done himself such credit by the talent, discretion, and temper he has displayed during all this time, and if Hume has not managed to reduce the Estimates, he has at least reduced the Secretary at War, for he is grown as thin again as he was." Her husband was unwell that year. His rheumatism was worse; and Emily, more dutiful than ever, expatiated on "Lord Cowper's kindness and good nature to me, which is so very great that I really do not know how sufficiently to show my gratitude for it." The tone was odd. For some husbands might have been alarmed by such excess of gratitude. Per-

BONNET AND SHAWL

haps Lord Cowper was still kinder than he knew.

Not that the lights of Almack's drew her from his side. She even loved to be at Panshanger in winter. But the bright eye that Lawrence painted was watching Palmerston's career. Now he veered towards the Whigs; his course and hers were closer, and her brother William stayed up to vote for him at Cambridge. Soon he began to air his views on international affairs; and her indomitable friend, the Lieven, primed her "*chère, chère amie*" in George Street with diplomatic information that was manifestly intended for the ear of Palmerston. For that easy-going *beau* began to count in party politics; they even talked of him as the political heir of Mr. Canning, and the Russian embassy was hopeful (though its hopes were sadly disappointed) that he would prove a rewarding pupil. So Emily might make a Whig of him and help him to be a great man into the bargain. Besides, he was so kind when he went

EMILY PALMERSTON

to Paris in the recess and wrote her all the gossip, returning loaded with presents for them all. And when she wrote to thank him, he was —perhaps it gave her the very slightest thrill to write it—her “dear H.,” though Harry Palmerston was still scrupulous in addressing “dear Lady Cowper.” They were seen together sometimes; and Mr. Creevey leered when he met them at Lady Sefton’s, while Mr. Greville wrote in his most malicious vein about “the Lover.” She was not afraid to help him, though; and when the Whigs came in, she pressed Madame Lieven to say a word for him to the Prime Minister, who was a particular friend of hers. The word was spoken; and when Lord Grey named Palmerston his Foreign Secretary, it is just possible that some part of the credit may be Emily’s.

So there he was, a great man at last, with William for a colleague and her brother Frederick for one of his diplomats. Sometimes he was at Panshanger as well. Not that

BONNET AND SHAWL

he played the constant lover. For one winter, when she went abroad with Cowper, he was positively seen with a rival divinity. Gay chroniclers caught him dining with Lady Jersey and paying morning calls ; he took her to the play and even, if gossip was to be believed, invited her to Broadlands. Other goddesses appeared before this ageing Paris (he was nearly fifty now) ; and there was one season when rumour married him to Mrs. Jerningham, while Mrs. Petre sat, a fair trophy, in the House of Commons to hear him speak and caused irreverent comment on “ the venerable cupid.” But Emily could wait. Indeed, she had to ; since Cowper, with the familiar obstinacy of husbands, lived on. Her unfailing attention served to prolong his dignified, if invalid, existence. But William was Prime Minister now, exasperating Mr. Greville with “ his lazy, listening, silent humour ” ; and her “ dear H.” was his leading colleague. Cowper was failing too. She nursed him bravely—“ I

EMILY PALMERSTON

read him half the night. . . . I was almost out of my mind with anxiety and with no rest either night or day." She was distracted when he died—" the best of friends and the kindest of husbands. The most benevolent and the kindest of men. The most strictly just, and the most considerate of the feelings of others. All his good qualities would fill a page, and his faults were almost none; at least I never knew a mortal in whom was less to blame or more to love and admire and respect." For she had loved him. Had he not been kind and handsome? But, perhaps, she had respected him still more than she had loved him. For her elegy has a slightly churchyard air; one seems to catch in it the chilling note of a lapidary inscription.

She was lonely now. Her brother Melbourne, busy tutoring his youthful Queen, was hard at work. Em was at Brighton, too, in the first autumn of the new reign, hoping hard that Palmerston would be commanded to the Pavi-

BONNET AND SHAWL

lion. It was almost bold of her. But he was always asking her to marry him now. Even her brother was a little touched by “the excessive niceness of his steady perseverance.” Pressed by his offers, she asked her brothers what to do; and Melbourne even went so far as to consult the Queen, who asked, with schoolgirl sagacity, if late marriages between persons of settled habits were apt to be successful. Her Prime Minister confessed upon reflection that married life would be a great change for Palmerston, who had always been “accustomed to run about everywhere.” Her brothers were affectionate with her, found her looking “like a pale rose,” and thought her gown the night before “rather dashing.” For they admired their pretty sister (she was still pretty at fifty-two). But brothers are always apt to be a shade impatient with a sister’s maiden hesitations; and whilst one urged her almost gruffly “if she likes it, to do it, not to potter about it,” the other remarked less helpfully in Latin

EMILY PALMERSTON

that if she was so doubtful, she had better not. But Palmerston prevailed, as he was apt to; and before 1839 was out, they married at St. George's—bride of fifty-two and bridegroom of fifty-five. They were still lovers, though; and their guileless little Queen considered the step highly becoming “because Palmerston, since the death of his sisters, is quite alone in the world.” Yet solitude had never been the most conspicuous feature of his life. But he had his partner now.

III

Theirs was a perfect marriage, though marriage rarely crowns a thirty years' romance. But their romance was crowned by nearly thirty more of marriage. His honeymoon was little more than a hurried snatch of Christmas leave at Broadlands, where she found him “so completely happy that it is quite a pleasure to look at him.” Then they were back in London,

BONNET AND SHAWL

and the world began to hear of Lady Palmerston's parties. But who can say when that honeymoon was over? In two years she was writing of "the Anniversary of my marriage —two years that each deserve a flitch of bacon." Eight more, and her birthday letter told him that it was "the most fortunate day of my life, the one to which I owe all my happiness, for it is your birthday." In ten she was waiting like a schoolgirl for him to come down to her at Brighton—"Whenever you write me word that you have opened your carpet bags, I shall make a bonfire on the Steyne." After four and twenty years she sat, past seventy now, to hear a Prime Minister of eighty steer his Government round an awkward Parliamentary corner, sitting out the long night until the House divided; it was after three in the morning when the figures were announced; and someone saw him vanish up the stairs towards the Ladies' Gallery, where Em was waiting, and the old lovers embraced in the

EMILY PALMERSTON

summer dawn. For they were still lover-like after more than fifty years. And in the last year of all he could still draw her arm through his and turn his sweetest smile on two young couples to say, “Here we are, three pairs of lovers.”

But her life with him was more than a protracted idyll. For the partnership was rich in political consequences. Her unrivalled management of parties gave him a unique advantage over all other public men. All shades in politics met on the staircase at Cambridge House; an awkward interview with Mr. Cobden could end in a civil murmur that “Lady Palmerston receives to-morrow evening at ten.” Parliament, indeed, was occasionally shocked by the splendid *mélange* of her visiting-list; and a nervous critic once forced him to explain that no sinister conclusions need be drawn from the presence there of Mr. Delane, of *The Times*—that the editor had done him the occasional honour of mixing in society under his roof (and

BONNET AND SHAWL

so, for the matter of that, had the Leader of the Opposition), but with no other obligation than to make themselves agreeable during their stay at Cambridge House. The critic was duly silenced. But his complaint, perhaps, was just. For the parties were of infinite, if slightly irregular, political utility. England had long been governed by the party system ; but in the hands of Lady Palmerston the term began to acquire a new meaning.

Her services were not confined to such wholesale assistance. For she could intervene effectively with individuals. Their friendship had brought her brother Melbourne and her friend, the Lieven, into his circle ; the virtuous young Ashley was her son-in-law and managed to interest his new relation in the Ten Hours Bill ; and once at least she contrived a more delicate transaction for her “ dear Harry.” When the political alchemists of 1852 were busy brewing a Coalition Cabinet, they had offered him the

EMILY PALMERSTON

Admiralty, which he refused for the sufficient reason that he preferred to be Home Secretary. But would they ask him ? Em wrote a hurried note, informing the right quarter " if you could speak to Pal^a again and urge him strongly to reconsider his determination that he might perhaps be induced to do so. . . . If besides your opinion and advice which he so much regards you could be empowered to offer the Home Office I think this might tempt him. . . ." An excited postscript begged the recipient not to " answer this letter unless you can do so by the return of my Servant, as I should be afraid of its falling into P.'s hands." P., one may surmise, would have forgiven her. For the right offer was forthcoming ; and she could inform a friend with adorable duplicity that " after many negotiations and many refusals from Palmerston he has at last been prevailed upon by Ld. Lansdowne to form part of the new Govern^t."

BONNET AND SHAWL

Not that she took his reverses with equal calm. Critics often received a stinging note beneath her gilt coronet; even Brougham was once scared into silence by her indignation. And when their skies were darkened by his sudden dismissal, her pen supplied the lightning —John Russell was “a little Blackguard,” the Court a nest of anti-Palmerstonian intriguers deep in “a Foreign Conspiracy,” just “an intrigue of Normanby Phipps and the Prince worked up by the deep disappoint^t of the Orleans overthrow”; and indignant Em, her relatives involved, her genders sadly mixed on the noble torrent of her indignation, was left to marvel at her consort’s calm, whilst “it is so lucky for an effervescent Woman to have such a calm and placid husband which no events can irritate, or make him lose his temper.”

But her advice could be more pacific. He had his troubles with the Queen, and Emily was full of woman’s wisdom on the arts of manage-

EMILY PALMERSTON

ment. She came almost shyly “ poking in with my small advice”—how Palmerston, commanded to Balmoral, should “ remember you have only one week to remain there, so you should manage to make yourself agreeable and appear to enjoy the society ”; that she was “ sure it would be better if you *said* less to her—even if you *act* as you think best ”; what a mistake it was to “ think you can convince people by Arguments ”; and how much wiser on the whole “ to treat what she says more lightly courteously, and not enter into argument with her, but lead her on gently, by letting her believe you have both the same opinions in fact and the same wishes, but take sometimes different ways of carrying them out.” Was there ever a more judicious manual for the coaxing of awkward Queens by impetuous Prime Ministers ? Women, perhaps, would make the best Privy Councillors under a female sovereign. But Palmerston’s was a back that

BONNET AND SHAWL

did not bend easily; and in that one respect he remained unteachable even by Em.

So they lived on; and the world changed round them. Ladies put on crinolines and Alexandra curls; the mode for gentlemen veered steadily from D'Orsay towards Dundreary; line-of-battleships grew smoke-stacks and armour-plating, while the shires were veined like an ivy-leaf with lines of railway. But Palmerston presided blandly over every form of change—over industrial expansion, Rifle Volunteers, cheap claret, and Mr. Gladstone. Still, as in 1811, “pains-taking and gentlemanlike to the highest degree,” he ruled Victorian England at its most Victorian. For the reign was at its height; and it was not all his sovereign's. The crowning decade was the reign of Palmerston, a bland dictatorship with Emily for queen, standing perpetually in her diamonds to smile and nod at all the world as it came up the stairs in Piccadilly, while the big London footmen bawled the names. The

EMILY PALMERSTON

bright candles watched her Harry and his “dearest love”; and by the lights of Cambridge House the world—the changed Victorian world—could make its bow to an old beau from Almack’s and his incomparable belle.

LADY MURIEL JAMES

LADY MURIEL JAMES

*Whoe'er she be—
That not impossible She.*

CRASHAW, WISHES TO HIS SUPPOSED MISTRESS.

1. *William James to Miss Catherine Farquharson, Boston.*

BROWN'S HOTEL, DOVER STREET, LONDON,
July 3, 190—

MY DEAR KATE,—Here we are, travel-stained but happy, at the latest and most distinguished of our addresses. Write quickly, or you may never have a second chance of inscribing an envelope to so eminent a destination. For whilst an adolescent nation eats peanuts round you in the innocence of the prime, we are housed in the very bosom of monarchy, nobility, church and army. Piccadilly rolls its tides at our feet. St. James's Palace is visible

BONNET AND SHAWL

from the coffee-room with a slight cricking of the neck. And as for Bond Street, pieces of it keep appearing in our food. So you may judge what unaccustomed heights we soar to. Dear Harry, it is true, lends more than intermittent aid to our faltering pinions. He met us at the dock with something unusual in his manner. Not that he looked the bridegroom, or hummed the Wedding March, or plaited flowers in his hair. He was still dear, old, good, innocent, and more than ever lovable Harry. But as our little train rumbled across the tiny English fields to London, he appeared to be doing his very best to say something. You will remember (no one in Boston better) how incurably inexplicit our dear Harry can be, how gracefully he can avoid the crudity of a direct statement, but by dint of breathing and sighing round and round it conjures up the semblance of a hint. We were at Winchester, or thereabouts, when the intimation opened. But Clapham Junction was upon us, before we

LADY MURIEL JAMES

were made finally and unquestionably aware that our accustomed *gîte* in Cromwell Road was deemed hardly suitable for participants in the coming celebrations, that something worthier had been prepared; that, in fine, promotion to our present heights awaited us.

And so here, dearest Kate, we are.

2. *William James to F. C. S. Schiller, Corpus Christi College, Oxford.*

LONDON, July 5, 190—

DEAR SCHILLER,—Of course he will like it* beyond anything. I can think of no more suitable wedding gift. His grasp of Pragmatism was always, I grieve to confess, uncertain; and this should serve to strengthen him (to say nothing of Her) in the faith. But why only one copy? Surely no room in their house can be complete without it.

* *Studies in Humanism*, by F.C. S. Schiller.

BONNET AND SHAWL

3. *William James to Miss Catherine Farquharson, Boston.*

BROWN'S HOTEL, DOVER STREET, LONDON,
July 7, 190—

MY DEAR KATE,—The time draws on, and with it the process of what dear beatific Harry calls our “immersion.” This salutary business is conducted mainly at dinner-time. We have dined with him, with Her (she is extremely tall), with others, including (a never-to-be-forgotten festivity) her progenitor, the aged Earl. Life in Boston has accustomed you to encounters with those who have earls among their ancestors, but not (I think) for immediate relatives. We got on well enough. Dear Harry had evidently prepared his *beau-père*, by a corresponding process of “immersion,” with copious accounts of my achievements in Brazil with Agassiz; and he remained throughout the evening immovably under the impression that I was a hunter of big game, before whom

LADY MURIEL JAMES

Nimrod paled. I tried once or twice to shake it. But he reverted to his native state of error, and I entertained him with all the anacondas of the Putumayo. I liked him. But Henry seemed a little pained, when I reported on the homeward walk that, earl or no earl, he seemed to be as liberal-hearted a man as the Lord ever walloped entrails into. (Strange how the proximity of dear Harry always tempts me to the most grotesque excesses of Americanism—but I love to see the big head tilt back and the slow eyes dilate, as the chill creeps along his veins.)

4. *Henry James to F. C. S. Schiller, Corpus Christi College, Oxford.*

LONDON, July 9, 190—

Let me, my dear Schiller, out of a rich sufficiency of fish-slices, answer with punctual gratitude your so welcome, so helpful (for it is helpful, your offering, isn't it?—especially at

BONNET AND SHAWL

such conjunctures, when the need for a trifle of *Humanism* is more than ever urgent for heads rising uncertainly and at ever so long intervals above a tide of *things*, of licences special and otherwise, of jobmasters, of reserved compartments, of string, of tissue-paper and bulky packages, of, in a word, the given moment emerging dimly from the wrappings of my present condition), so—*excusez du peu*—congruously chosen that I hang about you, however inarticulately, *de toutes les forces de mon être*, borne up on the above-named flood by just the glimmer of the gleam of a hope that I may hang more proximately still on the—dare I name it?—15th in a fond effort to convey some hint of my, of our, of everybody's thanks “in person.”

LADY MURIEL JAMES

5. *William James to Miss Catherine Farquharson, Boston.*

BROWN'S HOTEL, DOVER STREET, LONDON,
July 12, 190-

MY DEAR KATE,—Your *Inhaltsvoll* letter gratefully received. Commend me to the brethren, of whom I can hardly think in the imminence of our Saturnalia here. We flourish exceedingly. But dear Harry seems to flag a little. Last evening before dinner he walked me five times round Hyde Park, endeavouring to give expression to some uncertainty of mind. We dined a little after ten; but his scruples are not even yet quite plain to me. . . .

6. *From "The Times," July 16, 190-*

JAMES: FFOLIOTT,—On July 15, 190-, very quietly, at St. George's, Hanover Square, HENRY, second son of the late HENRY JAMES,

BONNET AND SHAWL

of Albany, N.Y., U.S.A., to MURIEL AGATHA, eldest daughter of the EARL OF BILTON, of Bilton House, Clarges Street, and Little Sneethings, Warwickshire.

7. *William James to Miss Catherine Farquharson, Boston.*

543, CROMWELL ROAD, LONDON,

July 15, 190—

DEAREST KATE,—The knot is safely tied—Henry pale but determined, and his bride taller than ever under her lace and orange-blossom. The Earl, still convinced of my sporting proclivities, urged me to give the bride “a huntsman’s kiss.” They are now speeding to felicity on the arms of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway; whilst we, you will see from the above address, have relapsed into the state from which God was pleased to call us for a brief interval.

LADY MURIEL JAMES

8. *Lady Muriel James to Hon. Eleanor Dun church.*

LORD WARDEN HOTEL, DOVER,

July 15, 190—

MY SWEET ELEANOR,—Would you believe it, the dear man lost nothing more than a hatbox at Charing X., and one of his own at that. I wonder how you have all got on. The crush on the stairs was dreadful. I was half afraid that *boisterous* brother of his—the trapper, or something equally new-world—was going to attempt a second embrace. So different from dear Henry. He seemed almost thoughtful in the train.

H. has just stepped out for a little solitary walk, to see the moonlight on the sea (would you believe it of him?). I just saw the lights of the Calais boat slipping so peacefully out of harbour. . . .

BONNET AND SHAWL

9. *Henry James to William James.*

GARE MARITIME, CALAIS,

July 16, 190—

Have achieved soundest and roundest identity of simplification leaving Muriel luggage all similar connotations Dover pray breathe appropriate explanations Earl forward letters together with sufficiency male clothing poste restante Dijon nuptial scenes all fantas-magoric now.

SOPHIA SWINBURNE

SOPHIA SWINBURNE

*Faustine, Fragoletta, Dolores,
Félice and Yolande and Juliette.*

DEDICATION, 1865

1. *From the "Putney Advertiser," March 21, 188—*

LICENSED VICTUALLER requires smart young lady to help with beer-engine; quiet trade and good prospects: state age. Address Mortlake Arms, Richmond Road.

2. *Miss Sophia Grimes to Mrs. Grimes, Haggerston.*

MORTLAKE ARMS,

Tuesday.

Well here I am, dear Mother and all at 28, and its not so bad either. It is a nice little house not so good as the last though but you can't have everything can you? The folks about here seem a little odd. . . .

BONNET AND SHAWL

3. *Miss Sophia Grimes to Mrs. Grimes, Haggerston.*

MORTLAKE.

Friday night.

... You remember me telling you about the funny little old gentleman the one I call Clockwork because he goes so regular well would you believe it the other morning just as I drew his pint he Spoke to me. Asked me to name the day and all quite properly. He kept looking behind him over his shoulder all the time and muttering to himself about somebody called Theodore, and I was terribly afraid Mr. Clark would come back into the tap and find him with his little feet dancing over each other and the tips of his fingers fluttering just like two little canary birds. I was that taken aback. "Well did you ever," I said to him, "such goings on" . . .

SOPHIA SWINBURNE

4. *A. C. Swinburne to John Morley.*

2, THE PINES, PUTNEY.

July 17, 188—

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Your association with the embodied infamy still known to a few shrinking recrants as Gladstone and for a passing moment—how long, oh Lord, how long?—first where he should be last, Prime Minister of England, may yet be turned to serve a nobler purpose. Can you, official sources of information aiding, notify me in what district of registration I am now residing and where the nearest Registrar of Births and Deaths is to be found? As I ask in a mood of idle inquisitiveness and the question is not one of business, there is no need for our dear Watts to be troubled with your reply.

BONNET AND SHAWL

5. *A. C. Swinburne to Theodore Watts-Dunton.*

SEAVIEW, ISLE OF WIGHT.

August 3, 188—

Hounds of spring on winter's traces further
search superfluous located here with Venus
Verticordia in all future editions Poems and
Ballads substitute roses and raptures of virtue
send bedsocks.

6. *From Max Beerbohm, "No. 2 (bis) The Pines"*

. . . and one afternoon—it must have been a month or so later—as I sat, a demure intruder, in the morning-room with Watts-Dunton, an unfamiliar voice fell across our post-prandial gossip, stemming that gentle stream on which past and present floated together. Or rather, damming it. For that, precisely, was the voice's business. The folding-doors—the sturdy, grained Victorian doors—

SOPHIA SWINBURNE

flew open; and for an instant, as Watts-Dunton and I turned smoothly in our horsehair chairs, a vision greeted us. Not otherwise, I thought, did Zeus appear to Semele in the sudden glory of the thunder-flash. Only that afternoon we were two Semeles, both gentlemen, and Zeus appeared to be a lady. Inveriddeed she was a lady, macnadarically coiffed and bloused in some bright colour. Before the unexpected sight my eyes dropped modestly; but as the lashes brushed my cheeks, I saw her framed in the doorway. An instant later the picture was withdrawn, as Swinburne's voice came fluting down the stairs. I seemed to catch something about Cotyutto; and, again, a reference to Astarte. The folding-doors clashed to again; and Watts-Dunton and I, left alone with the horsehair, dared not raise our eyes to one another's. It was twenty minutes before he spoke again, and then only to mention William Bell Scott without enthusiasm. I never saw her there again. . . .

JULIE DE GONCOURT

JULIE DE GONCOURT

Qu'est-ce qu'il y a Deux ?

PANTHÉON-COURCELLES.

From the Journal of the Goncourts, 186—

18 April.—The jasmine in our garden is more like a Hokusai than ever. This evening, at dinner with the Princess, Flaubert was almost deafening. He is Stentor in the body of Patroclus. We said so. The Princess was amused, but several of our enemies looked envious.

26 April.—Sainte-Beuve once saw Talleyrand getting into a cab.

28 April.—The rehearsals of our new play are growing almost insufferable. Got resigned

BONNET AND SHAWL

his part five times last week; the scene-painters are on strike; and the fireman refuses to appear at the *première* unless we will agree to modify the third act. Dear Jules consoled himself by buying a *kakemono* of the Yoshiwara from Lichtheim for 6,000 francs. I am in need of consolation too. I think I shall confide the gnawing anxieties of an artist born in advance of his times to Julie.

29 April.—Julie confided to me in the cab that she has troubles of her own. They may have a documentary value.

3 May.—Sainte-Beuve once heard Necker sneezing in the next room.

5 May.—Julie's troubles begin to fascinate me. We might make a novel of them. After all, fiction is only the fact of others. But there is no need to worry dear Jules with them in

JULIE DE GONCOURT

the early stages. The fireman's scruples are entirely satisfied; but Got has resigned again.

7 May.—We were more brilliant than ever at our weekly dinner. Renan is really insufferably vain. My research is becoming more arduous and has led me to miss five rehearsals in the past week. Julie is a document in herself.

8 May.—Married Julie at the Mairie of the 14th Arrondissement. The fireman, quite reconciled now, acted as witness. My pleasure was only marred by the absence of dear Jules. It is the first step that we have ever taken separately.

14 May.—Our *première*. Neither Got nor the fireman appeared at the theatre. But their absence was quite unnoticed as the disorder, which surpassed all previous standards, stopped

BONNET AND SHAWL

the play in the first *entr'acte*. The dear Princess was enchanted. Afterwards a little supper at the Café Riche with the whole company and dearest Julie. She got on so well with dear Jules. The prospects of our novel seem bright indeed.

27 May.—Hard at work on the novel with Jules and Julie. It will surpass all our previous achievements. Sainte-Beuve continues to remember people.

1 June.—The jasmine in our garden. . . . oh, I have said that before.

8 June.—To-day Jules gave me two bronze toads after breakfast and announced that he had some news for me. As he seemed a trifle embarrassed, I gave him a *cloisonné* vase and asked him what it was. It seems that he

JULIE DE GONCOURT

married Julie yesterday at the Mairie of the 22nd Arrondissement. The sympathy between us is so intense that he also, it appears, had reached the conclusion that she is a document in herself. It is our supreme collaboration.

THE END

